Music Week

August 2023

MELVIN BENN
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MAHALIA
The face of UK R&B

FABRIC
A nightlife of its own

"I'm writing my own timeline"

ASHNIKKO
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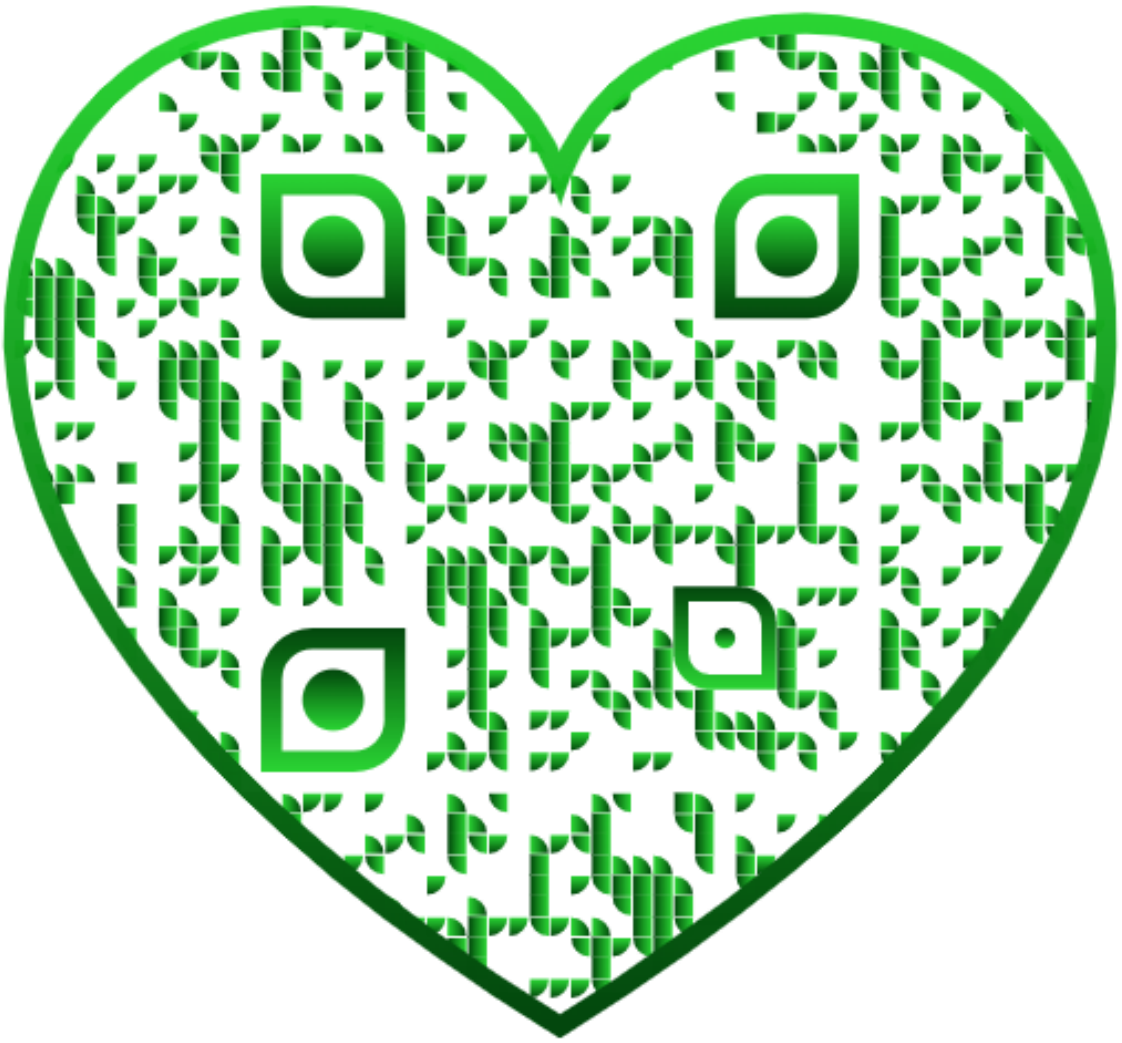

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EDITORIAL

HEAD OF CONTENT George Garner
george.garner@futurenet.com

DIGITAL EDITOR Andre Paine
andre.paine@futurenet.com

FEATURES EDITOR Ben Homewood
ben.homewood@futurenet.com

CONTENT EDITOR/PRODUCER Miranda Bardsley
miranda.bardsley@futurenet.com

ART EDITOR Steve Newman
steve.newman@futurenet.com

CHARTS & DATA Isabelle Nesmon
isabelle.nesmon@futurenet.com

CONTRIBUTORS
Adenike Adenitire, Sammy Andrews, Koury Angelo, Mark Davyd, Niall Doherty, Anna Fielding, Charlotte Gunn, James Hanley, Paul Harries, Colleen Harris, James Hickie, Alan Jones, Louise Haywood-Schiefer, Emmanuel Legrand, Paul Stokes, Jennyfer J. Walker, Carla Marie Williams, Paul Williams

COMMERCIAL

ADVERTISING SALES DIRECTOR, MUSIC PORTFOLIO
Lara Jaggon
lara.jaggon@futurenet.com

SENIOR EVENT MANAGER Madelene Andersson
madelene.andersson@futurenet.com

SUBSCRIPTION SALES
0208 955 7020

PRODUCTION

B2B PRODUCTION MANAGER Matthew Eglinton
matthew.eglinton@futurenet.com

MANAGEMENT

MANAGING DIRECTOR, MUSIC Stuart Williams

UK CRO Zack Sullivan

COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR Clare Dove

HEAD OF PRODUCTION US & UK Mark Constance

GLOBAL HEAD OF DESIGN Rodney Dive

HEAD OF DESIGN (MUSIC) Brad Merrett

GROUP ART DIRECTOR B2B Nicole Cobban

COMMERCIAL FINANCE DIRECTOR Dan Jotcham

INTERNATIONAL

Music Week is available for licensing and syndication. Contact the licensing team to discuss partnership.

HEAD OF PRINT LICENSING Rachel Shaw
licensing@futurenet.com

MusicWeek

121 - 141 Westbourne Terrace, Paddington, London, W2 6JR

Editorial: 0330 390 6751
Advertising: 020 3878 3723
Subscriptions: 0208 955 7020

For any queries with your subscription please contact the number above
Email musicweek@abacusemedia.com

musicweek.com/subscribe

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Chief Executive Officer Jon Steinberg
Non-Executive Chairman Richard Huntingford
Chief Financial and Strategy Officer Penny Ladkin-Brand
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

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Welcome to

Music Week...

Act the Parton

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending Dolly Parton's London press conference to launch her first ever rock album, aptly titled Rockstar. She was, as ever, wit and charm personified. "I don't think I'm gonna lose any country fans, and if I do, it won't be many and I probably won't miss 'em," she laughed, when discussing the prospect of alienating her core audience with the project. Things got more serious, however, when the notion was presented to her that she could live on as a hologram or disembodied AI voice after she's left this mortal coil. Forget working 9 to 5, Dolly, how about eternity?

"Well, I've left a great body of work behind," she pondered. "I'll have to decide on how much of the high tech stuff I want to be involved in, because I don't want to leave my soul here on this earth. When I'm gone, I want to fly with it. But I'll be around, we'll find ways to keep me here."

The key word there is "ways". Plural. The sheer amount of different paths successful artists must now plot is staggering. And some of them have proven to be incredibly successful. For all the scepticism surrounding hologram technology, few could argue against the power of what ABBA Voyage has achieved. Not only has their groundbreaking show passed one million visitors since launching in May 2022, it has also brought their music to younger generations: still the undefeated way of protecting a legacy.

"The music has reached a lot of people that it hadn't reached before," remarked Chris Dashwood of Universal Music Recordings about their joint win with Polar Music for ABBA in the Catalogue Marketing category at the Music Week Awards 2023. "When you go and see [ABBA Voyage], there are so many young people, so many children and so many people that are discovering ABBA for the first time."

This really drives home that we're now a long, long way past the point of artists just leaving a recorded catalogue behind and maybe being involved in the odd book or documentary. Indeed, when I interviewed Dolly Parton for *Music Week* a couple of years ago, I asked her about how she was approaching managing her legacy in her own lifetime. The dominant way in which that was being considered by her peers at the time was catalogue buyouts.

"As a business-minded person, you have a lot of things to consider," Parton told me of her strategy when it comes to planning for the future. "Control is one thing, but being smart *and* being in control? That's the real thing."

I think the industry can learn a lot from Parton's philosophy, especially one of her more unique approaches. She has an unreleased song locked in a box in her Tennessee amusement park Dollywood that will not be opened until 2045. Neither unreleased demo, nor hastily-assembled posthumous project without artist involvement, it's a creative, distinctly human bid to defy mortality. As with most issues in life, Dolly Parton usually has the solution.

George Garner, Head Of Content

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

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Contents

FRONT SECTION

06 THE BIG STORY
Polydor president Ben Mortimer joins Silas Howison-Waughray and Paddy McLean to unveil their plans for new dance label imprint, Chaos

08 TEAM UTA
Senior execs David Zedeck and Obi Asika on the agency's London HQ and developing Afrobeats and UK rap stars

09 FOR THE RECORD/ TAKE A BOW

11 SPOTLIGHT
Moon Projects founder Mary Rahmani talks supporting artists, forming a JV with Warner Chappell, and TikTok

14 START ME UP/ IN POD WE TRUST
We meet The Name Game's founder Daisy Carberry in Start Me Up, while our podcast of the month is Cambridge Audio's Made By Music

15 DIGITAL DISCOURSE
Sammy Andrews highlights the power of metadata in her monthly column

16 TWEETS OF THE MONTH

17 RISING STAR
The N3xt Up founder, Back 2 Basics co-founder and manager Marley Azu-Jones shares his journey so far

18 ON THE RADAR
The 2023 Ivors Rising Star Victoria Canal opens up about beating imposter syndrome and her upcoming EP

20 PLAYLIST/ TASTEMAKERS

21 MAKING WAVES/ SYNC STORY

22 KEY RELEASES
A look at all the biggest albums coming your way very soon

23 INCOMING
We meet Jungle to hear all about their fourth album Volcano

24 HOTSHOTS

FEATURES

28 ASHNIKKO
Ushering in the shape of pop to come, renegade artist Ashnikko tells the story of debut album WeedKiller alongside their teams at Warner Records and Various Artists Management

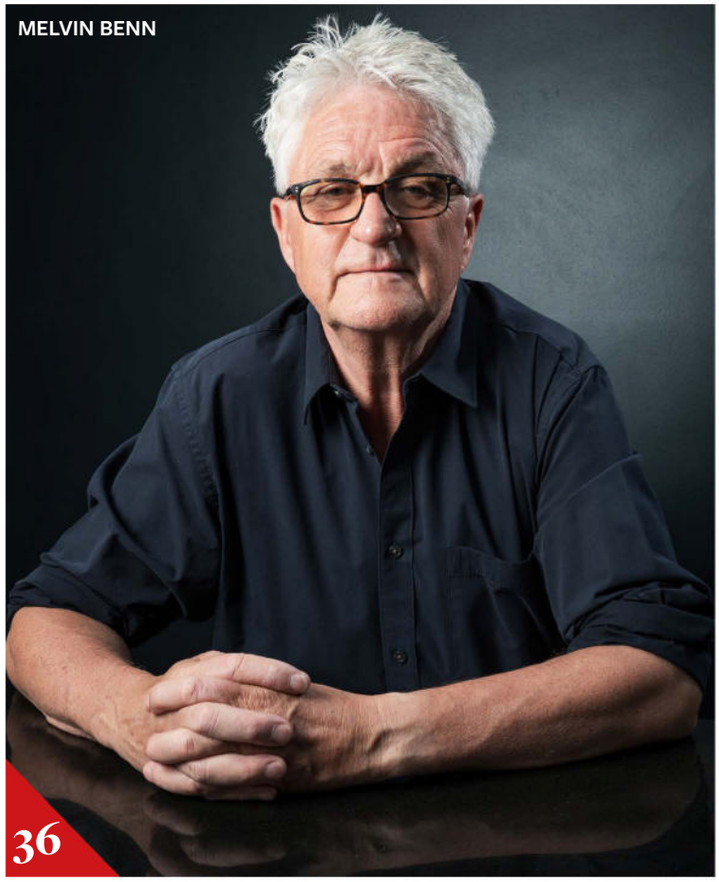
PHOTOS: Paul Harries, Vasso Vu, Mariola Zoladz/Sony Music, Atlantic, Karina Barberis, Billy Allen

28

"Even I have no idea what my music sounds like anymore"

ASHNIKKO

COVER STORY



36 MELVIN BENN
Festival Republic's MD discusses the issues facing the live industry, representation on festival line-ups and the grassroots sector

44 MAHALIA
The UK star and her team tell us all about breaking into the industry at 13, the future of R&B and her candid second album IRL

50 YOLANDA BROWN
The BPI chair, saxophonist, composer, radio presenter and education expert on her new grassroots venue Soul Mama and diversity in the industry

56 ATLANTIC A&R
To celebrate their Music Week Awards success, co-president Ed Howard and members of the A&R team reveal all on breaking talent

62 FABRIC
The iconic club's key players on dance music and the future

67 LABEL SERVICES
Our latest special report into an ever-changing sector

REGULARS

43 MENTOR ME
Photographer AmzyOBR serves up her Top 5 Tips on making it in the world of music photography

72 HITMAKERS
Little Mix's 'fifth member' Kamille reflects on how the iconic break-up anthem Shout Out To My Ex came to life and sent the group to No.1

74 CENTRE STAGE
MVT CEO Mark Davyd calls out recent reports on the UK's cultural sector to argue for better treatment of grassroots music venues

75 CHARTS
An in-depth look at this month's biggest movers and shakers

92 ARCHIVE
We take a look through the pages of the music business of yesteryear

94 AFTERSHOW
Ivors Academy Fellow and music legend Sting muses on songwriting, working with Shaggy and Las Vegas

THE BIG STORY

Chaos theory: Polydor launches new label to connect artists with global dance community

Following Jazzy's solo smash, Polydor president Ben Mortimer joins Chaos leaders Silas Howison-Waughray and Paddy McLean to share their vision for the imprint

— BY ANDRE PAINE —

Polydor executives have spoken to *Music Week* about building a dance music legacy and a new model for artists with the company's Chaos label.

Chaos achieved a chart breakthrough with debut release Giving Me by Jazzy, which peaked at No.3 last month and has passed 200,000 sales (Official Charts Company). The DJ and singer from Dublin has also hit No.1 in Ireland.

The new imprint is headed up by co-general managers Silas Howison-Waughray and Paddy McLean.

"They are both exceptional executives who live and breathe the music and lifestyle," said Polydor president Ben Mortimer.

Chaos is launching amid a resurgence for dance music.

"It feels that, post-pandemic, kids want more high-energy, high-tempo dance music, in a live environment particularly," said Howison-Waughray.

"The TikTok generation are now hitting the clubs," added McLean. "So the content flooding out of these clubs is percolating to all areas of TikTok and going global."

Mortimer said the "market is right" for the label launch.

"Anyone who knows me, knows how much I love dance music – my first job was the clubs editor at The Face," he told *Music Week*. "So a dance imprint has been on my mind for years. But if we were going to do it, it had to be done right – create something that could have the legacy of a Positiva, or dare I say it, a Ministry Of Sound."

Jazzy was signed following her success as a featured artist on Belters Only's 2021 smash Make Me Feel Good (Polydor), which peaked at No.4 last year and has sales of 1,029,173.

While Belters Only appear as co-producers on Giving Me, the track marks Jazzy's emergence as an artist in her own right.

"It was super-important for her to step out as a solo artist," said Howison-Waughray.

Alongside Jazzy, Chaos' roster includes Australian acts Confidence Man and Tom Santa, and UK dance duo Prospa.

"Representing the whole spectrum of dance music is quite important and not just having one linear route to go down," said Howison-Waughray.

"We're moving culturally and commercially, as any great label should," added Mortimer.

A key element for Chaos is to establish a strong connection

"We want to create a legacy like Positiva or Ministry Of Sound"
Ben Mortimer, Polydor

Jazzy club: *(L-R) Team Chaos at Polydor including Dulcie MacKechnie, Ajani Caro, Silas Howison-Waughray, Jazzy, Jack Duckworth, Paddy McLean, Oliver Hunter and Louisa Coppock*

with the dance music community, as well as promoting artists across a multi-media landscape including the label's own livestreams and podcast.

"Chaos will allow us to have a presence across all platforms and offer artists content opportunities," Howison-Waughray told *Music Week*. "So it's a combination of the music itself, but ultimately we are offering artists a 360-degree package."

Chaos' team are also working on live events and will further establish the label brand with a range of merchandise.

"Building this imprint is going to require a lot of talking points across different areas – livestreams, the podcast, live events, merch and the music," said Howison-Waughray. "Going further into Discord and Twitch gives artists and ourselves the opportunity to promote the label as far as it can go and gives the dance community something to really get behind. We're building a brand that has substance and is meaningful for fans."

McLean said this can "alleviate some of the pressure on new artists".

"Quite often in dance music, the record itself will explode quite quickly," he said. "There's then a lot [of expectations] put on the artists to develop their Instagram and their following on various different platforms.

"If in some way we can help with that via Chaos as another voice to talk to the dance community in the UK and in Ireland, then we feel like we're achieving something slightly different from the other imprints that have launched all over the industry."

Alongside success with Belters Only, Jazzy built an audience with mixes on SoundCloud. She was signed by senior A&R manager Jack Duckworth.

"Jazzy was a brilliant signing to Chaos by Jack Duckworth, an exceptional A&R talent, who's already had big success at Polydor with Belters Only," said Mortimer. "I want the Polydor A&R team to be able to move between Chaos and Polydor, and it's already working well."

"Jazzy's a proper dance head and brings a fresh new voice, look and energy to the scene," said Duckworth. "Her humility is really quite something and I'm still not sure she knows just how big she can be."

Mortimer said Polydor has built robust foundations in dance music.

"We're very strong," he said. "Over the last few years we've had huge hits with Jax Jones, Meduza, Becky Hill, Shane Codd and Rain Radio. Plus we have WUGD – our JV with Dan Stacey, Jax Jones' manager, to which he has signed Hannah Laing. Chaos is just the natural extension of all of this."

Good Love by Hannah Laing & RoRo entered the Top 10 last month and was approaching 100,000 sales as *Music Week* went to press.

In the future, there could be opportunities to bring together acts signed to Chaos with the wider Polydor roster.

"Polydor has been quite good at cultivating the cross-pollination of artists remixing each other, featuring with each other," said McLean. "For us, Becky Hill and Jax Jones are our two flagship dance artists, and for the new ones coming through it's our aim to get them to the same level.

"If a Jazzy and Becky record happens in two years, I'd be over the moon. But at the same time, we want to allow Jazzy to become a name in her own right over the next 12 months. And the same with Confidence Man, they add a whole other dimension to what Polydor can do in the dance space."

Jazzy has been lined up as the first guest for the Chaos podcast, which will be filmed and clipped across social platforms to widen the reach.

The Chaos team will focus on their artists' regional audience outside London, and a launch event is planned in Manchester.

"It's about creating an imprint that means something to fans all over the UK and beyond," said Howison-Waughray.

McLean is already looking ahead to the next decade for Chaos.

"If we can build a platform that they trust and look to for the next exciting new artists to come from this space, then for me that would be a job very well done," he said.

"The ambition really is to take it global, that is a long-term prospect," added Howison-Waughray.

PHOTO: Ariel Pedatzur

LIVE

United front: UTA powers rise of Afrobeats and UK rap icons

As UTA launches a new HQ, David Zedeck and Obi Asika share their outlook for live, highlight global talent and react to the agency's Music Week Awards win

BY ANDRE PAINE

PHOTO: Josh Moore

Special agents: *(L-R) David Zedeck and Obi Asika*

UTA's leaders have spoken about how its London operation has played a key role in the global growth of genres including UK rap and Afrobeats.

The company won the Music Week Award for Live Music Agency in recognition of their success with acts including Central Cee, Burna Boy, Bring Me The Horizon, AJ Tracey and N-Dubz. Their UK office also supports international UTA talent such as Lizzo, Lil Nas X and Bad Bunny.

"To win it twice in three years is obviously a massive honour for us – it was also quite a shock," said Obi Asika, co-head of UTA UK. "The Music Week Awards is a really important one for us."

"It was really special for us that people in the music business acknowledged the great work for various artists across the board in a world coming out of Covid," added UTA partner & global co-head of worldwide music, David Zedeck.

The execs were speaking as they launched the company's new London HQ in the West End. Asika works alongside co-head of music Neil Warnock and Rebecca Prochnik, director of creative strategy.

"We look at London as a powerhouse of global culture," said Zedeck. "We're looking to be part of the fabric of that entertainment scene."

UTA's Soho location houses the music practice, as well as agents covering production arts, podcasts, voiceovers and more. Talent and literary agency Curtis Brown Group became part of UTA last year.

The US firm first established a presence in London with its 2015 acquisition of The Agency Group. In 2021, the company acquired Echo Location Talent Agency, whose founder Obi Asika became UK co-head alongside Warnock.

"It's a great place to do business," said Zedeck of the UK. "While there are some challenges to deal with, such as Brexit, they always get figured out, economic issues get worked out."

Zedeck noted that "anything that starts in the UK tends to get magnified globally".

The London office played a key role in building international artists in rising genres such as Afrobeats and Amapiano. Burna Boy recently played a headline show at London Stadium, while Wizkid performs at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on July 29.

Amapiano has made a UK impact with acts including South Africa's Major League DJz playing a residency at Here at Outernet in London.

"The massive rise of Afrobeats, with Burna Boy and Wizkid each doing a stadium this year, has been an amazing moment, and [so has] everything we're doing with Amapiano," said Asika.

"We've been very active with new music, and leading a lot of [genres] whether it's Latin or African music. I feel like we are adding a lot of new tickets, and we're coming at things in a different way to a lot of the traditional agencies."

"We looked at the pandemic as a chance to enhance our business," added Zedeck. "Obi and his team were at the forefront of a lot of genres and leading the pack in so many things."

> *"Central Cee has been huge for us, and he's getting bigger"*
> **Obi Asika**
> **UTA**

UTA had two nominations in the Music Week Awards Music & Brand Partnership category for Burna Boy/Burberry and Central Cee/Jacquemus.

"Jack Clark has done fantastic business over the years in developing Central Cee, and Irene [Agbontaen, director of artist brand strategy] worked very closely with us on that as well – she's done great things in the brand space," said Asika.

UTA's UK co-head has global ambitions for Central Cee, who has signed to Columbia Records in the US, with Sony Music UK as a JV partner. The rap star recently scored his first No.1 single, alongside Dave, with Sprinter (268,539 sales so far – Official Charts Company).

PHOTO: Andrew Timms

Cee change: *Central Cee and Dave*

"Central Cee's been huge for us," Asika told *Music Week*. "He's getting bigger and bigger. I really feel like he's going to be the first [UK] rap name to break America properly, because I know from speaking to his manager, Bello, some of the collaborations that he's got coming up.

"He's not even put out a full album yet, so it feels like it's got real momentum and they've got really fantastic ideas. He's got a chance to [play] arenas in America, which would be the first time that's happened [for a UK rapper].

"Stormzy and Dave have done amazing things in the last few years, but it seems like he's set to even surpass some of the things they have done. We're super-proud and excited to have him."

Looking more widely at the genre, Asika suggested that rap events need to help build new talent, including acts from emerging sub-genres.

"There's still a massive thirst for rap, but I think the curation needs some work for next year," he said. "We haven't seen enough new names break – in the last year and a half, Little Simz and Central Cee have been the standouts.

"I feel like we're going to get some more wins, there are going to be some different styles coming through."

Following a busy 2022 with concerts booked pre-Covid finally taking place, Asika said the sector has largely recovered and is settling down.

While noting that consumers are now more demanding in terms of the quality of live music experiences, Asika said it was a time of "bumper business" for successful artists, clubs and festivals.

"We're going to have a bigger year in terms of bookings," he told *Music Week*. "I'm seeing mostly strong ticket sales across the board, it is going to be a fantastic year."

FOR THE RECORD

THE BIG ROLE

UK Music has hired Eunice Obianagha as its first head of diversity. Obianagha will develop UK Music's diversity strategy and work closely with its members, AIM, BPI, FAC, the Ivors Academy, MMF, MPA, MPG, Musicians' Union, PPL and PRS For Music. "UK Music has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to inclusivity within the music industry and I am deeply honoured and humbled to assume this newly established head of diversity role," said Obianagha.

THE BIG AWARD

Adele's agent Lucy Dickins is to be recognised with the Music Industry Trusts Award (MITS). The MITS award will be presented on November 6 during a gala ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel, held in aid of The BRIT Trust and Nordoff & Robbins. Lucy Dickins, WME's global head of contemporary music and touring, said: "I'm truly humbled by this recognition and honoured by the many colleagues and clients I've worked with throughout my career and at WME."

PHOTO: Alexandra Gavillet

THE BIG SALES

UK recorded music consumption is up 9.5% so far in 2023. According to BPI data, album equivalent sales (AES) totalled 89,755,479 for the first six months.

Streaming growth has surged into double digits again, with the half-year total for streaming equivalent albums (SEA) up 11.3% year-on-year to 79,241,502.

According to the half-year figures, physical sales were flat – down just 0.3% at 7,795,714 – as growth in LPs offset the 5.8% decline in CD sales. Vinyl sales increased by 12.4% year-on-year to 2,714,642 units.

The strong performance for vinyl was led by new releases from Lana Del Rey, Lewis Capaldi, Gorillaz, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Foo Fighters and Boygenius.

In the Official Charts Company's half-year albums rankings, EMI-signed Lewis Capaldi (*pictured*) has two entries: Broken By Desire To Be Heavenly Sent at No.6 (136,987 sales for the half-year) and debut LP Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent at No.10 (118,383 sales for the half-year).

The biggest-selling album of the first six months was The Weeknd's 2021 collection The Highlights (Island/XO/Republic) on 210,533 sales, followed by Midnights (EMI) by Taylor Swift and Harry's House (Columbia) by Harry Styles.

Miley Cyrus' Flowers (RCA) is the biggest single (1,248,655) of the year and the only track to pass a million sales in 2023.

PHOTO: Peter Hurley

THE BIG TECH

Warner Music Group has partnered with Web3 developer Polygon Labs on a music accelerator programme, including funding for successful applicants. "Through this partnership with Polygon Labs, we look forward to actively supporting the people, protocols and platforms that are pushing boundaries and helping WMG to reimagine how we use technologies to create, share and experience music," said Oana Ruxandra, chief digital officer and EVP, business development.

PHOTO: Louise Haywood-schiefer

THE BIG MOVE

Former BPI CEO Geoff Taylor has been appointed as EVP, artificial intelligence at Sony Music. He will be based in London and report to COO Kevin Kelleher. In a memo, Kelleher wrote: "AI has great significance for the future of the music industry and, as a result, more focused attention on it is required... Reporting to me and working closely with our Global Digital Business and Business & Legal Affairs divisions, Geoff will align and help coordinate the work of every part of the business that touches AI."

TAKE A BOW

The Good Witch
Peak Chart Position: No.1
Label: Atlantic Records/ Gingerbread Man

TEAM Maisie Peters

Management: Bobby Havens (Grumpy Old Management)
Atlantic Co-Presidents: Briony Turner/Ed Howard
Atlantic MD & President Of Promotions: Damian Christian
Gingerbread Man Records: Stuart Camp/Gaby Cawthorne
GM: Liz Goodwin (Atlantic)
A&R: Briony Turner/ Paul Samuels (Atlantic)
Marketing: Abbie Hollebone/ Max Lutkin (Atlantic)
Digital Marketing: Rosie Cumberlidge (Atlantic)
National Radio: Damian Christian/ Will Puxley (Atlantic)
Regional Radio: Carrie Curtis (Atlantic)
Television: Deirdre Moran/Holly Marshall (Atlantic)
Live Agent: Summer Marshall (CAA)
International: Olivia Spring (Warner Music)

Magic number: Maisie Peters

PHOTO: Alice Moitié

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SPOTLIGHT

SHINING A LIGHT ON MUSIC'S BIGGEST NAMES

Mary Rahmani, founder, Moon Projects

"We need more rock stars, we need to be building legends"

MARY RAHMANI, MOON PROJECTS

Former **TikTok** music exec **Mary Rahmani** launched LA-based **Moon Projects** in 2021 and has partnered with **UMG**'s **Republic** on streaming sensation **Em Beihold,** as well as forming a JV with **Warner Chappell**. Here, she shares her vision for the industry, platforms and artists...

Moon Projects covers multiple areas in music. Was that important for a new company?
"As I come across artists, I want to also be able to bring them into partnerships that will help to flourish their career relationships and give them a really good foundation. I always thought about potentially starting my own label. The partnership with Republic has been fantastic. It then just made sense to expand on the publishing side as well to give more resources [for music creators]."

How can you support artists in the fast-paced and demanding music industry?
"They need more advocates to stand up for them. Artists need to come with a vision, and we're here to empower that. With the boom in DSPs and apps, it becomes confusing to artists, who ultimately just want to create music. It's important to have a consistent voice in the executive space that has their back. We need more rock stars, we need to be building legends so our children can have someone to listen to. People like me and others need to be that safe space for artists."

What achievements are you proud of so far?
"The key achievement was when I was invited to Sir Lucian Grainge's home when I was at TikTok to have a meeting with him. I started off my career as an intern, I had three jobs and my car would break down on the freeway. I didn't have a hand helping me get into these roles. But I have always been so connected to music and just knew that I have these instincts and the heart to want to be involved – and taste, too! When Wendy Goldstein and Avery Lipman at Republic presented me with a joint venture, that was literally a dream."

At a time when some question the need for labels, what does that partnership give you?
"I chat with artists who are independent and use distribution partners and they're making great money. But there's only so much that some platforms can do. I saw the power of Republic when Em [Beihold] launched. She was getting a million streams, it was like fire, they catapulted her – she was all over the radio or doing videos, they gave a lot of support on the tour side and the content side. Indies sometimes have limited resources, so it really depends on where you're at in your career and your goals. You have to assess what your long game is."

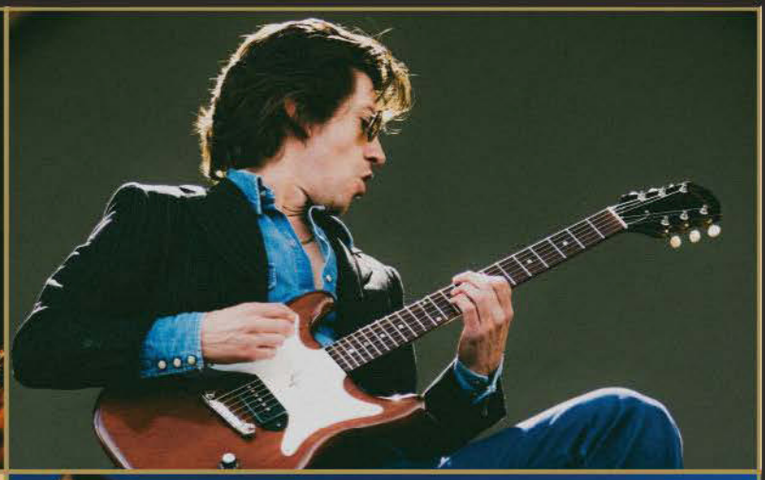
What does the Warner Chappell joint venture bring to the Moon Projects operation?
"Having a partnership with Warner Chappell will allow artists to put some money in their pocket, but more importantly give them resources where we can set them up with sessions with producers. I can work with them on their content strategy, and they can build their career in their own timeline. Then they will get to that point where, if they want to sign a deal with an indie or major, they can."

How can artists cut through the digital noise?
"We need to find artists that are creating something new and different. I miss hearing the wave of incredible bands coming out of the UK, or scenes in LA, San Diego or New York. So we have to go back to basics, be a bit more selective and not get so caught up in the data and the hype. Those things do fade really quickly."

Is TikTok now even more crucial for success?
"It's still important for artists and for the industry because it is still the number one driver to DSPs. However, I feel like it's more challenging to discover what's new, because a lot of the platforms have evolved with their own priorities. TikTok, Reels and Shorts are not music discovery platforms, they're short-form video platforms and music is one vertical of many. I would love them to do more long-term partnerships [with artists]."

Finally, do you have any favourite memories of working with artists at TikTok?
"I onboarded a lot of artists. Lizzo and Lil Nas X were definite high points. I remember getting an invite saying, 'We have this artist named Lizzo, she has a listening party, can we get some influencers?' Artists in general are really funny and have a great sense of humour, but I think when they were seeing all these younger influencers just doing their dances, they didn't know where their place was. But then once it clicked, it was really fun."

WORDS: Andre Paine **PHOTO:** Hylah Hedgepeth



Photography © Lewis Evans 2023

ARCTIC MONKEYS

UK TOUR 2023

29.05 **BRISTOL** Ashton Gate Stadium
31.05 **COVENTRY** Building Society Arena
02.06 **MANCHESTER** Emirates Old Trafford
03.06 **MANCHESTER** Emirates Old Trafford
05.06 **MIDDLESBROUGH** Riverside Stadium
07.06 **NORWICH** Carrow Road Stadium
09.06 **SHEFFIELD** Hillsborough Park
10.06 **SHEFFIELD** Hillsborough Park
12.06 **SWANSEA** Swansea.com Stadium
14.06 **SOUTHAMPTON** The Ageas Bowl
16.06 **LONDON** Emirates Stadium
17.06 **LONDON** Emirates Stadium
18.06 **LONDON** Emirates Stadium

13 SOLD OUT STADIUMS IN 9 CITIES
521,420 TICKETS SOLD

Congratulations from all at SJM Concerts to

Alex Turner, Jamie Cook, Matt Helders, Nick O'Malley,
Wildlife Entertainment and 13 Artists

S.J.M.
CONCERTS

START ME UP THE NEW COMPANIES DRIVING MUSIC'S FUTURE

Game on:
Daisy Carberry

NAME: THE NAME GAME
TECH: ONLINE COMMUNITY

Not every start-up has to be driven by rapid commercial growth. Technology is also helping to power non-profit organisations in music.

One such is The Name Game, which is utilising social media and web resources to build a supportive network of women and non-binary professionals and creatives that is trans and genderqueer inclusive.

Launched in December 2022 by EMI marketing executive Daisy Carberry, The Name Game aims to level the playing field with direct access to advice, connections and practical work experience.

"Although there is so much I love about the music business, I've grown tired of its boys' club mentality, so often giving men the head start," explains Carberry.

"The Name Game is a community and safe space for those working at any level to seek solace, whether a university student or label president."

The growing collective of artists and professionals gathers virtually via social takeovers including Instagram Live and TikTok Live. Online resources include the Named playlist and weekly jobs board.

"Social media can be empowering for those nervous to put themselves out there in the real world," says Carberry. "Unlocking advice and opportunities should not only be possible to those who talk the loudest."

Industry support for The Name Game has come from Universal Music, EMI, Dirty Hit, Spotify, BBC Introducing, BBC 6 Music and Climate Live.

> *"I'm tired of the industry's boys' club mentality"*
> **DAISY CARBERRY, THE NAME GAME**

The organisation has hosted a week of Instagram Live sessions including Pale Waves, Caity Baser, Dirty Hit's head of streaming & partnerships Perdi Higgs and EMI A&R exec Faye Fullerton.

"As a non-profit organisation, the support of artists and industry professionals is a necessity," says Carberry. "We have already built an incredible database of those willing to share their experiences in their own time."

The main focus now is to take the online community global and create work experience opportunities in Europe, the US and beyond.

"The Name Game's community is inclusive and ever growing, so I see no limitations as to what we can achieve," suggests Carberry. "Together, we will change the game."

IN POD WE TRUST INSIDE THE BEST MUSIC PODCASTS

THIS MONTH: MADE BY MUSIC

Hosted by: Sean Hannam
Contact: andy@74promotions.com

What was the inspiration behind Cambridge Audio launching the Made By Music podcast, and why did it make sense for the brand?
"The initial idea came from the company culture at Cambridge Audio. Every colleague chooses a music moment when they join. It's featured on their email signatures and business cards, as well as the big wall of vinyl album covers in their live music venue and office – which also serves as the recording location for the podcast. Asking iconic creators to talk about their personal music moments was the next logical step. Made By Music, being both the name of the pod and the new brand strapline, underlines the fact that Cambridge products – and Cambridge Audio as a whole – wouldn't have a reason to exist without music."

Given your background in audio, what makes your podcast unique?
"Great hi-fi gear enables listeners to hear every detail of their favourite tracks. And with Made By Music, Cambridge Audio now gives listeners a chance to get closer to the artists as well. The interviews themselves are a celebration of individual musical tastes and the diversity to be found within. It boils down to musicians talking about the music they love, and we can swing from Nina Simone to Glasvegas in a little under 30 minutes! Being able to listen to the tracks within the conversation is also a big difference from a lot of other chat-only pods. It really enhances the experience."

> *"Boy George told me I was going to hell because I'm an Aries"*
> **Sean Hannam**

What have been some of the best moments on the podcast so far?
"I loved hearing Guy Pratt's hilarious stories about being in the studio with Michael Jackson and Madonna – they were both very different experiences. Norman Cook made me laugh when he said he did a DJ set at Abbey Road in front of Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr and opened with a house remix of a Beatles song to break the ice. Boy George also talked about star signs – he's a Gemini and told me I was going to hell because I'm an Aries."

As you ask your guests to pick their ultimate "music moment" please indulge us as we turn your own question on you: what's your ultimate music moment, Sean?
"My ultimate music moment is There Is A Light That Never Goes Out by The Smiths – it's the greatest song ever written. It manages to be sad yet uplifting at the same time and it's the ultimate anthem for outsiders and hopeless romantics. On that note, it was also the first dance at my wedding. I've actually sung it live too, although I won't be doing that on the podcast any time soon."

You've come a long way, baby:
Norman Cook with Sean Hannam

You've already had some absolute legends on your show, but who is at the very top of your music icon bucketlist?
"My dream guest would be Johnny Marr – he's my guitar hero, and so passionate and considered about what he does. He's one of the nicest guys in the business. I would like to ask him how he felt when he first heard the playback of There Is A Light That Never Goes Out in the studio. What a music moment that must've been."

DIGITAL DISCOURSE

Deviate Digital CEO Sammy Andrews guides you through the ever-changing tech world...

THIS MONTH:

THE MAGIC OF METADATA

If you've ever seen me speak at music biz conferences you'll be aware that I often say, "The sexiest thing in the music business is metadata."

It's often greeted with jokes about how much fun I must be at parties, but without metadata, this industry would not exist. It is behind the discovery, monetisation and marketing of music. We have however, as a business, failed to get it right so far, as there have been no hard rules around minimum viable sets of data.

Last month, the Intellectual Property Office announced a UK Industry Agreement on music streaming metadata, off the back of the industry working groups following the select committee enquiry in 2021.

To give you an idea of the scale of the problem, a few years ago, The Ivors Academy estimated that, for song compositions, £500 million is incorrectly allocated every year due to missing or incomplete metadata. While it is overlooked by many in our business, metadata holds the key to unleashing music's true potential in the digital age.

Indeed, since the IPO announcement, it's become clear that many people don't understand the term or the implications this data has if they're not the ones actually inputting it. But make no mistake, every person in the industry has a part to play in ensuring that we fix this issue.

In this piece, we'll explore the vital role of metadata and how to get it spot on.

Metadata, in simple terms, is the information about the music we adore, nurture and promote every day. It covers things like artist names, album titles, release dates, song codes, composers, songwriters, featured artists, explicit content, genre and more. While these might seem like mundane bits of data, they're the backbone of organising and discovering music in today's digital soundscape.

Imagine a colossal library with shelves stretching endlessly into the distance. Now envision searching for a specific book without any system in place. Pure chaos, right? Well, that's precisely what happens when metadata goes missing or gets messed up, and why it's so important it's corrected.

Metadata also ensures the efficient categorisation of music. It helps DSPs create seamless user experiences, allowing fans to discover their favourite tracks with ease. Accurate metadata ensures that a musical masterpiece doesn't end up in the wrong genre or artist catalogue, preventing potential fans from ever finding it.

Have you ever stumbled upon a hidden gem through a personalised music recommendation? Chances are, metadata played a big role in that pleasant surprise.

Take a chance on metadata: Abba's Björn Ulvaeus has been a leading voice in reforming metadata

"Metadata is the backbone of organising and discovering music in today's digital landscape"

SAMMY ANDREWS
DEVIATE DIGITAL

Metadata fuels the algorithms that power music streaming platforms, enabling them to craft playlists and suggest artists based on the listener's musical tastes. By diligently entering metadata, artists and labels increase their chances of having their tracks featured in playlists tailored to their target audience. This opens doors to new listeners, amplifying exposure and potentially launching careers to new heights.

On the business side, metadata makes sure that everyone gets their (questionably sized) slice of the proverbial pie. Accurate metadata is crucial for collection societies, streaming platforms, labels, songwriters and artists alike. It allows for precise tracking of streams, making it far more likely that the appropriate royalties reach the rightful owners of the music, but only if it's correct.

There are also calls in the industry to make the song code mandatory for release metadata. This makes much more sense than the current practice of DSPs attempting to match them to their own databases for songs (ISWCs) based on track titles and lengths, but faces some issues in order to be implemented.

Obtaining an ISWC can take a long time, which doesn't work for artists wanting to release quickly. I'm hopeful, given the rumbles I'm hearing across the business, that this will be addressed.

Sadly for copyright infringements, metadata can be stripped from recordings. This has led to some sectors asking whether the industry should ensure the embedding of ISRC codes into recordings, but that's for another day! Back to our magical metadata.

So, what can *you* do to make sure that metadata is correct?

If you're reading this piece and you're still unsure, take a little time to get educated on metadata usage, and work with your artists, songwriters and partners to ensure delivery of the correct metadata from the off.

Establish a standardised format for your data. Consistency is key! Decide on a structure that suits your needs, capturing all the relevant information accurately.

Attention to detail is crucial when naming your files. Be descriptive and concise, and avoid vague terms. Opt for a naming convention that includes the song title, artist name and the version of the track (if applicable).

Make the most of ID3 tags, the metadata format embedded in digital audio files. Fill in fields like artist name, album title, track number, genre, song code and release date. Don't go too wild with genre labels, as that will actually hinder discoverability.

Also, double-check your metadata for accuracy before you hit the button. This is a big issue – typos, misspellings and wrong information render the data useless. Get it right the first time.

While I know that there is some pushback from certain areas of the industry, I am excited to see where the business will take the IPO voluntary agreement, but we can all do our part to ensure that it's a success for everyone.

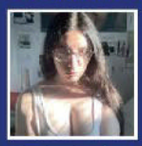
PHOTOS: Paul Harries, Eamonn M McCormack/Stringer, Getty

TWEETS OF THE MONTH

@planetalex_ Everything costs money and I am SICK of it ***(Alexandra Ampofo, Metropolis/Live Nation) Sunday, June 18***

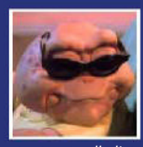
@lastdinnerparty Looked to the side of the stage last night and saw Florence Welch dancing and singing to our music!!!!!!! Can't believe I didn't drop my bass!!!!!!! ***(The Last Dinner Party, artist) Tuesday, June 27***

@maisiehpeters me wearing a cap in all my signings today because I came straight from Glastonbury and kept finding bits of twigs and leaves in my hair ***(Maisie Peters, artist) Monday, June 26***

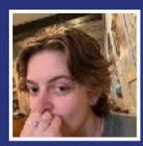


@dniellechelosky 76,792 unread emails in my inbox and none of them are job offers... going into music journalism was definitely a great idea ***(Danielle Chelosky, journalist) Monday, June 26***

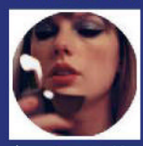
@RobBruceK Putting a baby to sleep and having hayfever is the worst combo ***(Robert Bruce, Capital Xtra) Monday, June 12***



@limitedmitch The industry plant conversation is tired and 9 times out of 10, inaccurate. Go out to shows, see exciting things, tell your friends about it. Get off Wikipedia and start actually listening to music. ***(Mitchell Stevens, Revenant Earth) Saturday, June 24***



@andthe_machine My brain cannot comprehend how many times it'll be hearing Padam today #PrideInLondon ***(Rachael Scarsbrook, BSI Merch) Saturday, July 1***



@taylorswift13 EXCUSE ME HI I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY I can't wait to see so many of you on The Eras Tour next year at these new international dates! ***(Taylor Swift, artist) Tuesday, June 20***

@rinasawayama No words to describe being a small part of a wonderful historic night singing Don't Go Breaking My Heart <3 @eltonofficial I love you. What a gorgeous farewell. Thank you to the entire team involved. @glastonbury thank u for the weekend of my life !!! ***(Rina Sawayama, artist) Tuesday, June 27***

#1 TWEET

@Slater81 Home from a first ever Glasto. Got very emotional all weekend just thinking about the career journey I've been on and the amazing opportunities this now gives me. Not often a reflective person but that's Glasto for you ***(Sarah Slater, Ticketmaster) Monday, June 26***

@townsendyesmate The Monday after Glastonbury should really be a bank holiday when you think about it. This is something I have always believed and campaigned for by the way and I'm not just saying it now because this is the first year that I have gone or anything. ***(Mike Townsend, ADA) Monday, June 26***

@rachelchinourir I went on tour with Lewis Capaldi and I just want to say, he is one of the loveliest artists. Even when he was ill, he fought so hard to keep going on stage and continued to check on my crew and take time for everyone. I wish him the best on his break ***(Rachel Chinouriri, artist) Tuesday, June 27***

@donnaymclancy Been at Download less than an hour and have already seen a man drinking beer out of a shoe and another dressed as a can of beans who told me he loved me. Home sweet home ***(Donnay Clancy, DawBell PR) Thursday, June 8***

@CATHFACTORY There's no point in continuously asking where all the women festival headliners are if everyone keeps on ripping them to shreds for being "industry plants" before they've even got out the gates. ***(Catherine Hurley, Charm Factory) Wednesday, June 21***

@c_osazuwa This is always part of my response when people ask me about AI music: Yes it's a great tool to help musicians but it's not going to replace them because you'll end up with music with the quality of the 73rd copy of a cassette tape eventually... ***(Christine Osazuwa, Shoobs) Wednesday, June 21***

RISING STAR

Meet the industry's brightest new talents...

Marley Azu-Jones

Artist manager/founder, The N3xt Up/co-founder, Back 2 Basics
@marley191

How did you get into the world of management?
"I never had any intention of getting into management, it came out of a trip to Jamaica where I was speaking to my cousin Fonzie, who's an artist. I was telling him about people – like radio producers or editors at publications – he should be in contact with, and he was like, 'Why do you even know this stuff!?' I just said that I felt those people were the ones really shaking things up in the industry, and Fonzie just responded, 'You're my manager!' There are various avenues to get into management, you just need to find the right artist you can add value to."

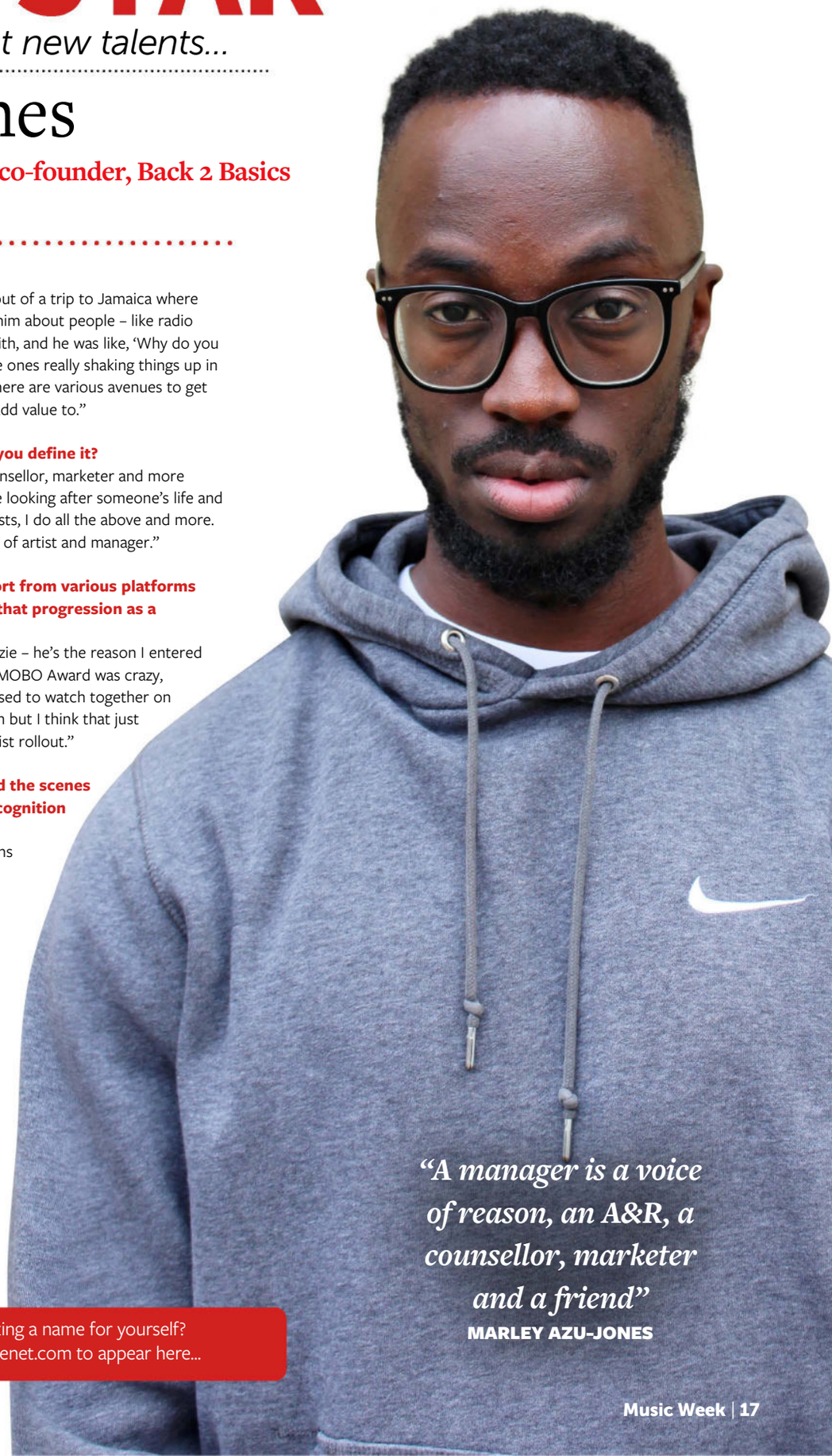
The role of a manager is constantly evolving. How would you define it?
"A manager is a range of things, a voice of reason, an A&R, a counsellor, marketer and more importantly a friend. For me, a manager understands that they're looking after someone's life and not just their career, so when developing and supporting my artists, I do all the above and more. My artists are people that I truly care about, away from the titles of artist and manager."

Since you started working together, Fonzie has had support from various platforms and has sold out headline shows. How does it feel seeing that progression as a manager and how hard is it for new acts to cut through?
"Seeing the progression is a beautiful feeling, especially with Fonzie – he's the reason I entered the industry. FelixThe1st is also my little brother, so winning the MOBO Award was crazy, and some of the stuff we've got coming is with brands that we used to watch together on my grandma's TV! It's incredibly hard for new acts to cut through but I think that just makes us all work harder to push the envelope on the typical artist rollout."

The N3xt Up is a platform that shows what goes on behind the scenes in the music business. In your opinion, is there enough recognition for the people in those roles?
"There's nowhere near enough recognition. It's one of the reasons I wanted to do The N3xt Up's The Engine series, which is where I highlight people behind the scenes. I love supporting managers going against the grain with the way they show their artists to the world, like Mark Jones and Bronson Powell [Proph], Kieran Thompson [Sipho and Nicolle], Charlene Wango [Natanya], Johanna Pirila [Joalin] and Wilhelmina Bonde [Luciia]. There's also my friends, Ahamed Amin [Bawo] and Jesse Dickson [Flowerovlove] who are forever dropping gems and are people that do the work and stay out of the noise."

Finally, what is your biggest ambition?
"I want to continue to connect creatives and I want my artists to be spoken about in 10, 50, 100 years time. For The N3xt Up, I want to create three clear strands of the business: a production arm where I create original content, a live arm and a distribution arm where I release music."

MARLEY'S RECOMMENDED TRACK: Finch Fetti x Baski+ x 22Ted – BMH+



"A manager is a voice of reason, an A&R, a counsellor, marketer and a friend"
MARLEY AZU-JONES

ARE YOU A RISING STAR? Under 30? Making a name for yourself? Email Miranda Bardsley at miranda.bardsley@futurenet.com to appear here...

VICTORIA CANAL

*Crowned **Rising Star** at this year's **Ivors, Victoria Canal** could be one of 2023's big breakouts. Here, the singer reveals how she is overcoming vulnerability and discrimination as she takes on the industry...*

It's a sunny spring morning and Victoria Canal is nervous. The reason? Her new double A-side single, Shape/She Walks In drops in just a few hours.

"It should be a routine thing, putting your art out there into the world," says the singer/songwriter, who tearfully accepted the Rising Star Award at the Ivors a few days before our interview. "It's nerve-racking in all the normal ways. You make yourself very vulnerable and hope people like it."

Canal's last release was November 2022's Elegy EP, which received rave reviews, not least from Coldplay's Chris Martin, who described the track Swan Song as, "one of the best ever written". His backing got Canal a meeting with Coldplay's label Parlophone, where she is now signed. Now, it's all down to her.

"I'm putting more pressure on this release," she says. "My ambitions are bigger. I feel that I have always had pretty delusional ambitions, but now I am seeing that some of them are becoming somewhat real."

Canal is speaking to *Music Week* from her flat in London. The conversation is briefly interrupted, as so many work-from-home chats are, by a loud banging on the door when a parcel is delivered. As she skips over to open it, her laptop comes with her, showing a glimpse of orderly jars in a green-painted kitchen.

This brief shot of domesticity, however, is not how Canal generally lives. Now 25 ("I do know that's still very young") she's dealing with what she describes as "a quarter-life crisis" by saying 'yes' more.

"I've always been so focused on music and my career, going at 1,000 miles per hour," she says. "But I'm trying to implement ways of enjoying myself outside that, otherwise life just passes and you've been working all the time."

When she spends time in California, she says, she likes getting high. In London, she likes tagging along to events and making new friends.

Born in Munich to an American mother and Spanish father, Canal has always lived a nomadic life. Her father's job, for a company that manufactured medical devices, meant their family lived all over the world. As well as Munich, she has also lived in Tokyo and Barcelona, among other places. She started playing piano sitting alongside her grandmother, but it was at high school in Dubai that she started to really focus on music.

"Kids aren't very generous at that age," says Canal, who was born without her right forearm due to amniotic band syndrome. "They tend to use humour as a weapon. I was a goof with braces, a fringe, one arm and bad taste in clothes. I was really wholesome in a way that wasn't considered cool."

She hid out in the music rooms, discovering a mentor in her teacher who taught her how to use production programmes and explained practical things such as how to book gigs. After leaving school, her music career was underway.

As she began to work on her songwriting and release music independently, she also started to consider her responsibilities as an artist.

"I think all artists are role models for their fans," she says. "I look up to Chris Martin, Brandi Carlile, Lizzo. There's something in all of them that I would like to embrace in myself. So, whether it's my femininity, my gayness or my body..."

Shape and She Walks In both touch on body image.

"I'm talking about body dysmorphia, disability, all this stuff," says Canal. Some of the early reactions, largely centred around some promo shots of Canal in trousers and a bikini top, were intense.

"From men and women," she says. "[Saying things like] 'Stop showing your body, no one wants to see this, why are you sexualising yourself.' I'm just trying to be comfortable and brave, there's nothing sexual in it. And there's nothing wrong with being sexual either."

Canal goes on to detail her struggle with body dysmorphia.

"I've always suffered from an extremely skewed version of what I look like, I think, because I don't know what I look like," she says. "What I think I look like is different to what people describe. I think everyone's lying to me."

She has always found it difficult to be photographed from the right side and, in the past, has switched sides with people when walking down the street so that she can think straight.

"I've felt that the right side of my face is unrecognisably ugly, like the Hunchback Of Notre Dame," she says. "But I'm hoping I'm reaching a place in my life where I can view those things as old wounds."

A childhood of always being the new kid has left her with some transferable skills suited to life as an artist.

"I'm good at making friends," she explains. "And at the same time, I've learned that people's opinions of you can be pretty malleable. I perhaps have a phobia of staying in one place for too long, but I'm also really good at making deep connections fast."

The latter, she says, has become very useful when collaborating with other musicians ("You may only have a day together, but you need to communicate what you're about"). Collaborators so far have included Ben Folds' Ryan Lerman and Bon Iver's Sean Carey.

Canal first came to Chris Martin's attention after posting a mocked up poster that jokingly claimed she was touring with Coldplay "forever and ever and ever". It was spotted by Dan McCarroll, Amazon's global head of originals and artist relations, who passed it on to Martin along with a Regina Spektor cover Canal had recorded. Martin loved it and wanted to get in touch.

"We FaceTimed and I totally tanked it, I was nervous and said all the wrong things," she remembers.

But Martin didn't appear to think so, he asked for more music and invited her to a recording retreat in Barcelona.

"It was like being around the Dalai Lama or something," says Canal. "But eventually I got over being really weird and nervous. It has helped me to stop putting people on pedestals."

As she builds towards the release of her first major label EP later this summer and, eventually, her debut album, Victoria Canal is finally accepting that she belongs as an artist, something that was helped along by her Ivors win.

"I didn't feel a drop of imposter syndrome," she says. "I really felt like I belonged. Not because I was on the stage, but with the people in the room, seeing so many peers and friends. It was really special, I felt like the king of the world. I felt invincible." **ANNA FIELDING**

ESSENTIAL INFO

LABEL: Parlophone
MANAGEMENT: Red Light
RELEASES: Shape/She Walks In (out now)

WHAT THE TEAM SAY: Jennifer Ivory, MD, Parlophone: "Victoria is an exceptional talent with an incredible voice who can write profound lyrics and captivating melodies. Her innate ability to connect with her audience and effortlessly transcend genres makes her poised to become a real star. We're delighted to be working with her at Parlophone and, as we gear up to release her forthcoming EP, are excited to help her continue to develop as an artist and reach new fans all around the world."

"I didn't feel a drop of imposter syndrome at the Ivors, I really felt like I belonged"

VICTORIA CANAL

PHOTO: Karina Barberis

THE PLAYLIST

RITA ORA
Don't Think Twice (BMG)
Dialling things back a tad from Praising You (Ft. Fatboy Slim), Rita Ora pushes towards her third album You & I with Don't Think Twice. Strings give way to a pop beat and chorus (complete with indelible '*na, na, na*' refrain) that recalls the anthems that made her name.
Contact: Kate Head
kate@stokedpr.com

ROMY
Loveher (Young)
Taken from Romy's upcoming debut Mid Air, Loveher tells the euphoric story of its author falling in love with a woman. The xx star made it while writing with Fred Again.. and was so moved that she kept it for herself, lighting the spark for a project that could become a landmark for UK dance.
Contact: Jon Wilkinson
jon@technique-pr.com

LIFEGUARD
17-18 Lovesong (Matador)
New on Matador, Chicago trio Lifeguard recently released Crowd Can Talk/Dressed In Trenches, a pair of EPs that offer an electrifying intro to their thrash-prone indie-rock. A fresh addition to US alt rock's rich canon, headbangers everywhere will approve.
Contact: Noam Klar
noam@matadorrecords.com

KONYIKEH
Teenage Dreams (FAMM)
Backed by the team behind Jorja Smith, Konyikeh performed on stage with Dave at the BRITs, and this track suggests it may not be too long before she's up there on her own. Born in London and classically trained, she has a voice that snatches the breath from your throat.
Contact: Rachel Campbell
rachel@wired-pr.co.uk

LOVELESS
I Hope I'm Not Sick (BMG/Rise Records)
While some of us used lockdown to vegetate and quiz on Zoom, others did far more. Loveless formed just before Covid hit, filling their time by recording covers of pop hits. Written about mental health, this emo-tinged single shows the power of their own songs.
Contact: Phoebe Sinclair
phoebe.sinclair@appetitepublicity.com

CALL TO THE VOID
Uncontrollable (Self-released)
The road to forming Call To The Void has been a long one for John McGlade and his brother Matt, who previously operated as Deny All with bassist John Settle. But now, with singer Jack Osborne (not that one) on board, the grungy UK rockers are unleashing hell.
Contact: Call To The Void
cttvband@gmail.com

PHOTO: Geffen

OLIVIA RODRIGO
Vampire (Geffen)
It takes a special kind of break-up song to convey heartbreak while delivering killer put-downs, and that's precisely what Olivia Rodrigo does with Vampire. Led by sombre piano, the comeback single everyone has been waiting for fizzes momentarily into a bloodthirsty stomp, drums crashing ahead of an awesome bridge that dashes off the song's best line: '*You can't love anyone 'cause that would mean you had a heart*'. Vampire is a clever, riotous pop song that sounds unlike anything else released this year. With new album Guts due on September 8, it's time for Rodrigo to rip up the charts once again.
Contact: Stephanie Duncan-Bosu
steph@blkdntcrk.com

Hear **THE PLAYLIST** at spotify.com/user/musicweek

TASTE MAKERS

The industry's favourite new sounds

Deb Grant, DJ, BBC Radio 6 Music

SAY SHE SHE – C'EST SI BON

Say She She are a three-piece based in Brooklyn, New York and are made up of three women, Piya Malik, Nya Parker Gazelle and Sabrina Cunningham.

They're a really interesting band, with tight songwriting. It's a little bit psychedelic and a little bit disco, very reminiscent of Nile Rodgers and Chic, who their name nods to. All three members were brought up with classical singing training and they do these amazing operatic vocals over Chic-style basslines.

The vocal harmonies are incredible and the lyrics are really clever too. They had a track out last year called Norma, which was written after the overturning of the Roe Vs Wade law, but they managed to make it danceable and radio-friendly.

They put out their debut album Prism last year, and their latest single is called C'est Si Bon, which means 'It's so good'. It has a really cute video and is unashamedly joyous. There's no edge of irony to it, but there is an edge of coolness. They are just a happy band making happy music, no bones about it.

Say She She also look really cool and have an awesome stage presence, I just love everything they've done so far.

MAKING WAVES

THIS MONTH'S HOTTEST BRAND NEW ACT

PARIS PALOMA

The emerging star from the Midlands taking over TikTok with feminist anthems...

Key Track: Labour
Label: Nettwerk
Management: High Plateau Productions
Instagram: @parispaloma

Your new single Labour has a powerful message against misogyny and blew up on TikTok. What made you tackle that subject so directly?
"People talk a lot about vulnerability, but I don't know another way to be, because I think the whole appeal of songwriting is the genuineness of it. Before I would hide personal experiences through things like metaphor, but with Labour I was writing about a bigger experience. I'm 23 and I'm not a put-upon housewife, but I know that it is a path that I could go down. It's still a prevalent part of my consciousness."

How would you describe your sound?
"The disintegration of genres fascinates me and I love that they're becoming specific to the individual, so I'm happy for my sound to be interpreted differently by listeners. It was called witch-pop recently, and I don't know what that is, but it sounds like something I want to be a part of!"

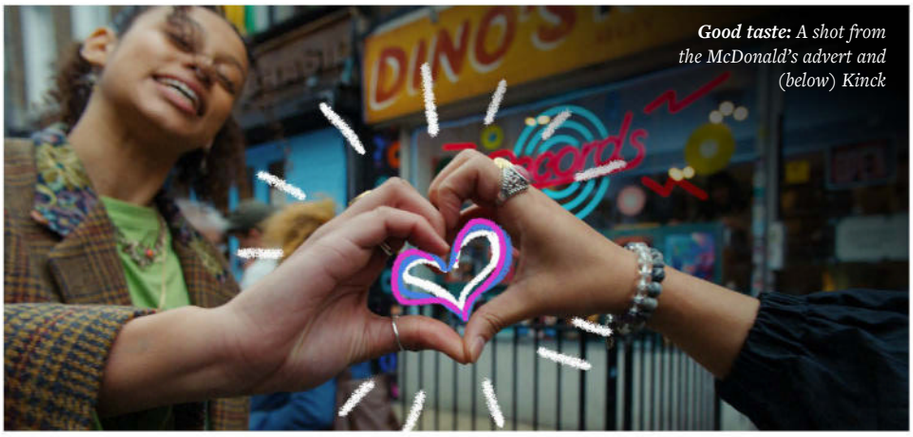
You're also a visual artist. How does that influence your songwriting?
"My art really informs my songwriting. I see the visual aspects of a song when I'm writing it, I imagine music videos, characters and motifs. For Labour, I had this image of an island symbolising the domestic paradise women create for their partners, and that became the album art. I love being a visual person, it makes the storytelling all the more richer."

Finally, what has your experience of the industry been so far?
"I've never been with a major label so I don't know any different, but it's nice to work with people who are free to pursue artists they are fans of. I'm very supported by Nettwerk, it's lovely being independent, but it's nice having people behind you who believe in what you're making as well."

Labour of love: *Paris Paloma released Labour earlier this year*

INTERVIEW: Miranda Bardsley **PHOTO:** Jamal Thomas

SYNC STORY



Good taste: *A shot from the McDonald's advert and (below) Kinck*

McDONALD'S/KINCK

BY MIRANDA BARDSLEY

Kinck is on the move this year, with three new singles under her belt and one track landing in the latest McDonald's advert, Buddy Handshake.

The Danish and Senegalese rising star's song, Delicious, accompanies two friends doing a handshake, before one jokingly refuses to share their chicken nuggets, accompanied by the campaign's tagline: 'They might be your bestie, but are they McNugget worthy?'

With the lyrics, *'Holy guacamole/For the rollies it's snack time'*, the track and advert are a great match, so much so that Kinck's team at Believe brought the original release date for Delicious forward a month to align with the McDonald's campaign release in May.

Robyn Summer, head of sync at Believe, and who worked with Siren Music on the project, is elated with how well all of the different teams worked together.

"We were thrilled to collaborate with Siren Music, Sharpa Music and our trusted label partner Field Supply to create this exciting opportunity for an up-and-coming artist," she said. "The track was originally set for release a month after the air date of the advert, but as an independent label, we were able to move quickly to align the release dates to maximise exposure for the artist and capitalise on the buzz surrounding the advert. We love how it turned out!"

Kinck, who released her debut single in 2018, has also expressed how thrilled she was about the advert and how it fit her values.

"This was a perfect match on all levels," she said. "As an artist, it's always the goal to make an impact and create something that connects people, and this advert aligns with my artistic direction in a way I wouldn't dare to hope for. Having an all-female team at Field Supply, being a female producer and landing a sync that uplifts female friendships is just super dope."

"This advert aligns with my artistic direction in a way I wouldn't dare to hope for"
Kinck

Spot: McDonald's Buddy Handshake
Title: Delicious
Artist/composer: Kinck
Publisher: Nettwerk
Master: Believe (OBO Field Supply)
Director: Sam Brown
Production company: Rogue Films
Air Date: 10.05.23

WANT TO GET YOUR SYNC STORY IN MUSIC WEEK?
Email Miranda Bardsley at miranda.bardsley@futurenet.com for details.

KEY RELEASES

The essential albums heading your way...

JULY 21

Bloc Party The High Life EP BMG
Blur The Ballad Of Darren Parlophone
Bruno Major Columbo Harbour Artists & Music/AWAL
Cian Ducrot Victory Polydor
Cut Worms Cut Worms Jagjaguwar
Greta Van Fleet Starcatcher Lava/Republic
Lauren Auder The Infinite Spine True Panther
London Grammar London Grammar: The Remixes Ministry Of Sound
Lori McKenna 1988 CN Records/Thirty Tigers
Saint Agnes Bloodsuckers Spinefarm
Various Barbie The Album Atlantic

JULY 28

Anne-Marie Unhealthy Major Toms/Asylum
Aphex Twin Blackbox Life Recorder 21F/In A Room7 F760 Warp
Bethany Cosentino Natural Disaster Concord
Billy Idol Billy Idol (Expanded Edition) Capitol
Brad In The Moment That You're Born Loosegroove
Dexys The Feminine Divine 100%
Georgia Euphoric Domino
Jason Bieler And The Baron Von Bielski Orchestra Postcards From The Asylum Baron Von Bielski
Joni Mitchell & The Joni Jam At Newport (Live) Rhino
Post Malone Austin Republic/Island
Stevie Nicks Complete Studio Albums & Rarities Rhino
Ten Tonnes Dancing, Alone Absolute

AUGUST 4

Brett Young Across The Sheets Big Machine
Mammoth WVH Mammoth II BMG
Miles Kane One Man Band Modern Sky
N-Dubz Timeless EMI
Skindred Smile Earache
Snow Patrol Final Straw (20th Anniversary) Polydor
Teenage Wrist Still Love Epitaph
The Sherlocks People Like Me & You TeddyBoy

AUGUST 11

Bonnie Prince Billy Keeping Secrets Will Destroy You Domino
Caskets Reflections SharpTone
David Bowie Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars OST – 50th Anniversary Parlophone
Elvis Presley Aloha From Hawaii: Deluxe RCA
Fran Lobo Burning It Feels Like Heavenly
Jungle Volcano Caiola/AWAL
Laura Groves Radio Red Bella Union
Liam Gallagher Knebworth 22 Warner
Lucy Spraggan Balance CTRL
Public Image Ltd End Of World PIL Official/Cargo
Status Quo Official Archive Series Vol.1 (Live in Amsterdam 2010) EarMusic
Suzi Quatro & KT Tunstall Face To Face Sun
The Hives The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons Fuga
Neil Young Chrome Dreams Reprise
The View Exorcism Of Youth Cooking Vinyl

OLIVIA RODRIGO
Guts is out September 8 via Geffen

PHOTO: Larissa Hofmann

AUGUST 18

Aerosmith Greatest Hits Universal
Bearings The Best Part About Being Human Pure Noise
Birdy Portraits Warner
Dizzy Dizzy Communion
Genesis Owusu Struggler Ourness/AWAL
Gregory Alan Isakov Appaloosa Bones Dualtone
Hozier Unreal Unearth Rubyworks
Idina Menzel Drama Queen BMG

Jon Batiste World Music Radio Verve/Interscope
Slipknot Live At MSG (Vinyl) Roadrunner
The Xcerts Learning How To Live And Let Go UNFD

AUGUST 25

Alice Cooper Road EarMusic
Ashnikko Weedkiller Parlophone
Bowling For Soup Songs People Actually Liked, Vol.2 Brando/Que-So
Claire Richards Euphoria Demon Music Group
Hannah Georgas I'd Be Lying If I Said I Didn't Care Real Kind
Hot Milk A Call To The Void Music For Nations
Laurence Jones Bad luck & The Blues Marshall
Morgan Wade Psychopath Sony
Nuage 0% Anxiety House Of Youth
The Armed Perfect Saviors Sargent House
Tim McGraw Standing Room Only Big Machine
Victoria Monét Jaguar II RCA
Willie J Healey Bunny Yala!

AUGUST 27

(((O))) (((4))) AWAL

AUGUST 30

Labrinth Ends & Begins Columbia

SEPTEMBER 1

Empire State Bastard Rivers Of Heresy Roadrunner
Slowdive Everything Is Alive Dead Oceans
Soen Memorial Silver Lining
The Paper Kites At The Roadhouse Nettwerk

SEPTEMBER 8

Allison Russell The Returner Concord

KYLIE
Tension is out September 22 via BMG

PHOTO: Edward Cooke

Anjimile The King 4AD
Ashley McBryde The Devil I Know Warner
Benjamin Gustafsson The Nature Within Decca
James Blake Playing Robots Into Heaven Polydor/Republic
Kvelertak Endling Rise/Petroleum
Olivia Rodrigo Guts Geffen
Róisín Murphy Hit Parade Ninja Tune
Romy Mid Air Young
Royal Blood Back To The Water Below Warner
Stornoway Dig The Mountain! Cooking Vinyl
Yussef Dayes Black Classical Music Warner

SEPTEMBER 15

Ash Race The Night Fierce Panda
Beck, Bogert & Appice Live 1973 & 1974 Rhino

Bring Me The Horizon Post Human: Nex Gen RCA
Corey Taylor CMF2 Decibel Cooper/BMG
Corinne Bailey Rae Black Rainbows Thirty Tigers
K Flay Mono Giant
Madison Beer Silence Between Songs Epic
Mae Muller Sorry I'm Late Capitol/EMI
Teddy Swims I've Tried Everything But Therapy (Part 1) Warner
The Hoosiers Confidence Downtown
The Pretenders Relentless Parlophone
Thirty Seconds To Mars It's The End Of The World But It's A Beautiful Day Concord
Trevor Hall Trevor Hall And The Great In-Between Rivers
Willie Nelson Bluegrass Sony

SEPTEMBER 22

Carrie Underwood Denim & Rhinestones Capitol
Colbie Caillat Along The Way Blue Jean Baby
Kylie Minogue Tension BMG
Matteo Bocelli Matteo Capital
Starbenders Take Back The Night Sumerian
Teenage Fanclub Nothing Lasts Forever PeMa

SEPTEMBER 29

Beverley Knight The Fifth Chapter 29th On Tag8/BMG
Black Stone Cherry Screamin' At The Sky Mascot

Jorja Smith Falling Or Flying FAMM
King Nun Lamb Marshall
Lucia & The Best Boys Burning Castles Communion
Michael Schulte Remember Me Polydor
Modern Nature No Fixed Point In Space Bella Union
Oliver Tree Alone In A Crowd Atlantic
Picture This Parked Car Conversations RCA
The Brand New Heavies Never Stop... The Best Of London

Please email any key releases information to isabelle.nesmon@futurenet.com
A more extensive release schedule is available in The new music section on musicweek.com

All you need is lava: *(L-R) Tom McFarland and Josh Lloyd-Watson release Volcano (inset) on August 11 via Caiola Records/AWAL*

INCOMING

Jungle formed in 2013, surfing a wave of hype that led to a **Mercury** nod for their debut. Here, ahead of fourth album **Volcano**, **Josh Lloyd-Watson** reveals how the London duo are reaping the benefits of going DIY...

"With our band, it's more powerful than just us, there's something cult-like going on"

Josh Lloyd-Watson

You're 10 years and four albums into your career. What was the band's mindset when you started making the new record?

"We'd just come off the road. We took a long time after our first record [released in 2014], which I always thought slowed the natural ascent of the band because we pissed around and did that classic second record panic thing where you go, 'Oh God, is this right?' After that four-year gap, we've been trying to get those pit-stop times down. This time, we came off the road and went straight back into the studio and got the record done between November and December last year and wrapped it up in January, which is probably one of our quickest turnarounds. I think you can feel that in the music, it doesn't really give a shit if you like it or not."

You were seen as a dance-y indie band initially, but Jungle feels more like an electronic project now. Who do you see as your peers?

"That's people putting it in boxes based on what we look like. There has always been an element of it being like a producer project, in the same way that Gorillaz might be. Justice and Daft Punk have always been massive inspirations, too. It's like there's something more powerful going on than just the person doing it, it's cult-like in some way. I never thought the first album was massively successful, there was always something bigger going on, so we've never seen it like that. That's the thing that keeps you going, we haven't got inflated egos, we're quite realist. We had a lot of [buzz] back then, but the media and the way we consume music have changed."

What's the biggest thing you've learned about the industry so far?

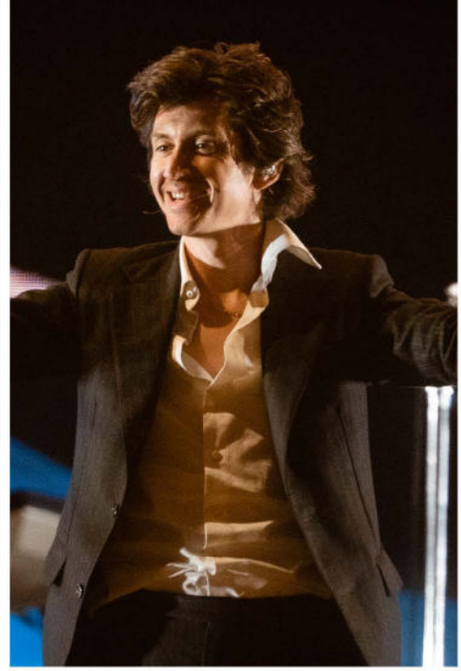
"Ultimately, that they're not going to do it for you. The industry jumps on ships that are already sailing. I knew that before we even started Jungle, because we'd been in another project and it had been washed out and didn't work. I took Jungle all under my control and just went, 'Alright, cool, I'll just do every side of this and not leave any gaps,' all the way from the branding and the online vision, to the videos, the music, the production and the mixing. The idea was to make every part of the process in-house. You're always going to have someone telling you what they think is right, but those people come and go. You've just got to go, 'Fuck 'em,' and stay strong."

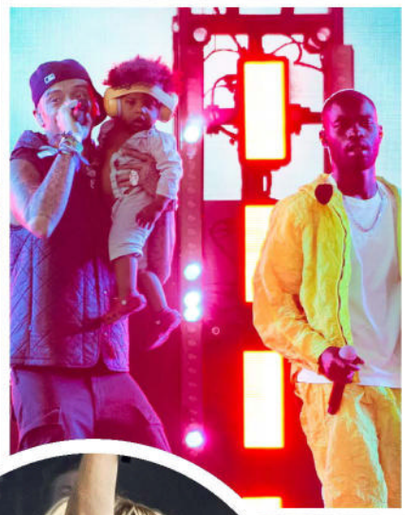
Your first two records were on XL, but your last two have been on your own imprint via AWAL. What are the advantages of going DIY?

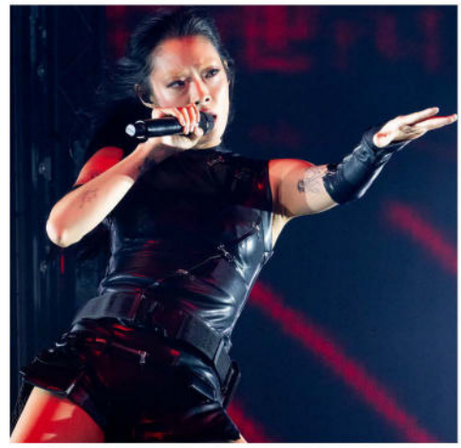
"It's an obvious one really – the deals on major record labels are still just insane. I can't remember the last time anyone went on Dragon's Den and they said, 'I'll give you 120 grand, but I want 85%.' As you grow older and you do 10 years in the industry, you're like, 'Wow, that is a *thing*.' That's just corporations. It's not labels, it's not people in the labels, it's capitalism and the powers that be, the systems that people have created over years and years. Coming off that and being on our own label is thanks to our manager, who's done an incredible job. We make good money on the masters and we don't have anybody to tell us what to do at any point, so making the records is much more streamlined."

INTERVIEW: Niall Doherty **PHOTO:** Matthew Arthur Williams

HOTSHOTS
SUMMER SPECIAL







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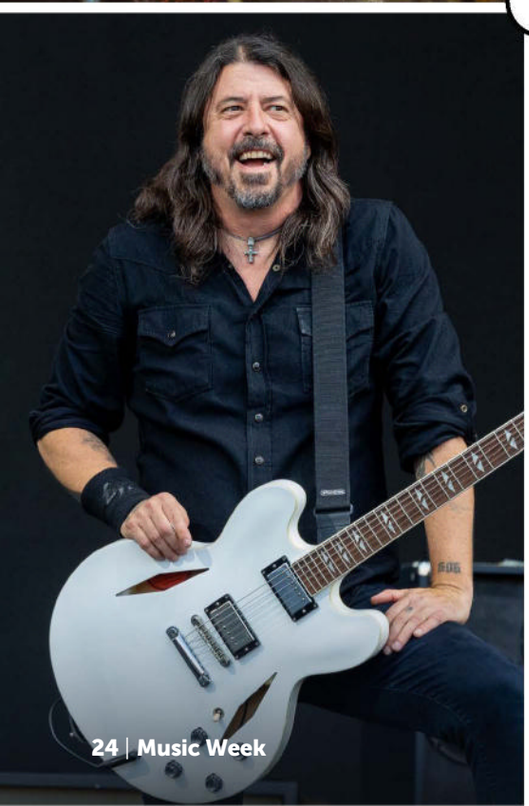

1. We're not Worthy! Glastonbury returned with a bang, with 210,000 people descending on Worthy Farm to see the likes of Elton John, Lana Del Rey, Arctic Monkeys, Central Cee and Dave, Rina Sawayama, Maisie Peters, Foo Fighters, Lizzo and more live. (Photos: Getty/Sophie Scott). **2. Beeb here now** The BBC team brought Glastonbury to the homes of millions of viewers. Pictured are Alison Howe, Emily Eavis, Lauren Laverne and Lorna Clarke. (Photo: BBC/Sarah Jeynes). **3. Doing it in Styles** Harry Styles celebrated his triumphant summer run with the Sony Music UK team at Wembley Stadium. (Photo: Lloyd Wakefield). **4. EMI on high (a)** The EMI team sporting their shiny new Music Week Award trophy for Record Company Of The Year. **(b)** Mae Stephens' team presented the EMI rising star with a silver disc for 250 million streams of If We Ever Broke Up. (Photos: Carsten Windhorst).

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1. Raise your glass Pink put on a stunning set to launch BST Hyde Park 2023. (Photo: Dave Hogan Media). **2. From first to last** It's all been kicking off at The O2. Pictured are **(a)** Elton John being presented with an award to celebrate his 10-night residency at The O2. (Photo: Ben Gibson/HST Global Limited/Rocket Entertainment). **(b)** Wu-Tang Clan being honoured for their first headline slot at The O2. (Photo: Jennifer Johnson). **(c)** Tenacious D also celebrating headlining The O2 for the first time, alongside their team. (Photo: Garry Jones). **3. Universal change** On the third anniversary of Blackout Tuesday, Universal Music's UK Taskforce For Meaningful Change (UK TFMC) posed for a special photo. It was accompanied by a letter to the business detailing all they've accomplished since announcing their 2021 manifesto while also pointing to new projects in the pipeline. (Photo: Kes Eccleston – @mellozwrld/Assistant Photo: Chase Pope – @dmochase). **4. A Modest affair** Modest! Management celebrated its 20th

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anniversary at The Maine in Mayfair. (Photo: Suzan Moore). **5. Jazz it was** Tomorrow's Warriors co-founder Gary Crosby OBE joined Jazz Jamaica All Stars to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Windrush Day at the Royal Festival Hall. (Photo: Graeme Miall/Tomorrow's Warriors). **6. Cause for thought (a)** The Universal Music charity cycle team undertook an epic journey to the EMI North offices in Leeds in aid of the Music Arts Production Charity. (Photo: Carsten Windhorst). **(b)** Island Records UK completed the Hackney Half Marathon to raise £4,500 for Small Green Shoots. **7. Forward momentum** PRS Foundation CEO, Joe Frankland, at the launch of the 10-year report into PRS Foundation's PPL Momentum Music Fund at The Great Escape. (Photo: Vic Frankowski). **8. Get a load of this** Over 100,000 fans attended Download Festival to celebrate its 20th Anniversary. Pictured are: **(a)** Metallica **(b)** Slipknot **(c)** Bring Me The Horizon and Nova Twins. (Photos: Matt-Higgs/Todd Owyoung/Jonti Wild). **9. Near and Deer** Damian Lewis played Black Deer Festival on the same day his debut album, Mission Creep, was released via Decca. (Photo: Lindsay Melbourne/Black Deer). **10. Between me and UTA** The industry was out in full force at the opening of UTA's new London HQ. Pictured are UTA's Jeremy Zimmer, Samantha Kirby Yoh and Obi Asika. (Photo: Josh Moore). **11. Sign of the times** Davido dropped into Sony Music UK's new HQ in London to renew his contract with Columbia. (Photo: Elliot Hensford). **12. Two in a Billion** Two artists were given the BPI's BRIT Billion Award. Pictured are **(a)** Becky Hill **(b)** Olly Alexander being presented with the accolade at the Mighty Hoopla Festival by Girls Aloud's Nicola Roberts and Kimberley Walsh.

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KILLER INSTINC

For a few years now, **Ashnikko** has been breaking boundaries, but the star's wild and fantastical debut album **Weedkiller** might just take things to a whole new level. Here, *Music Week* meets the artist, plus **Various Artists Management** and **Warner Records** president **Joe Kentish**, to tell a story that takes in identity, building a sustainable business and being a TikTok pioneer...

WORDS: NIALL DOHERTY **PHOTOS:** VASSO VU

ET

"The beauty of making music in 2023 is that you can dance between genres no matter what type of artist you are"

ASHNIKKO

Weed all about it: *Ashnikko, photographed for Music Week, June 2023*

On a baking hot Wednesday morning in late June, Ashnikko is where no one wants to be on a baking hot Wednesday morning in late June: stood slap bang in the middle of a heaving central London train station. Around the US-born singer and rapper are straggling commuters at the tail-end of rush hour and hordes of backpacked revellers boarding the trains to Glastonbury, but as has become a signature move for the 27-year-old, Ashnikko is headed in a different direction.

"It's the solstice and I'm going to Wales to celebrate it," says the star, who identifies as gender fluid. "I told my team that I'm disappearing into the forest, and that's what I'm going to do."

The morning has been spent rushing around buying fruit, flowers and other sundries one might require to abscond into the woods. Ashnikko has missed one train and now awaits another to whisk them into blissful retreat.

"I like taking a moment to be thankful, and revere the natural world," she says. "And to worship the sun a little bit, and being with friends doing mushrooms. The usual."

It's a getaway that is entirely in keeping with Ashnikko's forthcoming debut album, Weedkiller. A spectacular blend of industrial pop, electro-punk, swaggering hip-hop, slick hooks and uneasy electronica (sometimes all in the same song), it's based around the concept of a war between nebulous machines and a fae civilisation, Ashnikko using the springboard to delve into environmental concerns, personal trauma, queer politics and the political patriarchy.

"A lot of the visual language on this album is very much tied into nature worship," they explain. "I wrote a short story two years ago that spawned the rest of the album."

With long-standing collaborator Thomas Slinger, Ashnikko approached their first full-length as if she were scoring a film.

"We were very heavily inspired by what Hans Zimmer did for Dune, building out these beautiful sounds that fit the story, the narrative that we were trying to convey."

Before this train leaves the station, though, how about a little recap? Ashton Nicole Casey was born and raised in North Carolina before their family moved to Estonia and then Latvia in her teens. Ashnikko then relocated to London aged 18. Their early output was playful pop from an artist who couldn't seem to sit still, the sort of captivating personality for whom the spotlight seemed an inevitability.

Ashnikko felt its gaze when the song Stupid (featuring Yung Baby Tate) became a viral megahit after gaining popularity on TikTok. It has currently been streamed over 218 million times on Spotify and has 178,291 UK sales, according to the Official Charts Company. Ashnikko followed it with bigger hits that got bigger numbers, such as Daisy, which betters its listens by a few hundred million and hit No.24 in the UK (435,016 sales). After collaborations with similarly forward-thinking stars such as Doja Cat, Princess Nokia and Grimes, the 2021 mixtape Demidevil was a showcase of Ashnikko's dazzling variety of sounds. It debuted at No.19 in the UK and has 48,560 sales to date, but it felt more like a collection of crack future-pop anthems than a coherent body of work.

Mic skills: *Ashnikko on stage at Southside Festival in June and (below) with (L-R) David Bianchi and George Shepherd of Various Artists Management*

> "Ashnikko is about to become the biggest alternative star in the world"
>
> **DAVID BIANCHI VARIOUS ARTISTS MANAGEMENT**

All of which brings us neatly to the upcoming Weedkiller.

"I've put out loads of music but never called it an album before because I'm just a really horrible perfectionist," Ashnikko states. "I was like, 'If I'm gonna put out an album, every song has to be written with intention.'"

In the way that the album not just weaves through genres but bleeds them together, Weedkiller is the game-changing statement of a pop visionary, one unwilling to cede to the old rules. Ashnikko has no regard for how things used to work around here.

"Ashnikko is about to become the biggest alternative star in the world," declares Various Artists Management (VAM) MD David Bianchi. "It's all unbelievably exciting because it doesn't happen much like this anymore, where we just sold 141,000 tickets in America, where there's a merchandise business which tops at $40 a head, where the streams are in the billions, where the concept is fantastic, where the concert tickets fly out the door."

George Shepherd, who manages Ashnikko at VAM, says his first impression of the artist when they began working together in 2019 was of a trailblazer who had extreme conviction in what she wanted to do.

"At that point, they had been an artist for two or three years but only played one show in London to 300 people, not received national airplay, and weren't on DSPs," he recalls. "But what excited me about working with them was that there were things they hadn't yet had the opportunity to approach that they had ideas for, and the things they had done were executed to a level off their own back. They weren't relying on anyone else."

Signed to Parlophone, Ashnikko was brought within the purview of Warner Records president Joe Kentish after a company rejig in March. Kentish says that he was already closely following Ashnikko's progress.

"I've always been a little covetous of any artist I see emerging who seems to have a really clear direction," he tells *Music Week*. "It felt to me as an observer that this was an artist who had something to say, who looked like an original, who looked like they were very creative and had lots of ideas. It seemed like it was gathering scale very quickly, so when I came into Parlophone, I was excited to be a part of it."

"The label has been very kind to me and allowed me to put out the music that I want to make," says Ashnikko. "They really trust my vision. That has been incredibly liberating."

"Warner has been so supportive to give us the freedom to push Ash in this new breed of artists

PHOTO: Thomas Niedermueller, Getty

“‘Engage on TikTok’ is my trigger phrase, I got away with it somehow by not interacting”

ASHNIKKO

"This album definitely drove me to the brink of insanity, but I love it"
ASHNIKKO

that isn't dictated by the old metrics," adds Shepherd. "The creative mind that Ash is, it's bold and boundary pushing. There's still no better system in place for a global network of people to slam the ball home than a major label."

Ashnikko has no idea how to describe their own music. If someone were to ask them what their songs sound like, Ashnikko's response would be to scream into her own hands. Which might actually work, because some of their music is very "screaming into your hands".

"I usually ask them what it sounds like because I'm lost," she laughs. "I've lost the plot. I have no idea what my music sounds like anymore. I really have no idea. What would you say?"

Well, we'd say it's music that is breaking new ground and embracing the pioneering pop multiverse of every sound everywhere at once, at the same time as belonging in the lineage of sonic mavericks from Nine Inch Nails, to Missy Elliott, to MIA, to Grimes.

"I feel like that's the beauty about making music in 2023," Ashnikko continues, letting *Music Week* off the hook. "You can just dance between genres no matter what type of artist you are. There's so much more freedom."

As they approached the end of making Weedkiller, Ashnikko found it hard to let go. When we speak, final mixes still need to be approved.

"My manager is ripping his hair out right now," Ashnikko laughs. Going through the process, Ashnikko did learn something, just not necessarily a good thing.

"I'm much crazier than I thought," they exclaim. "More insane. I feel like I have no ability to look at my music with perspective. I've lost it completely. I listen to the sounds one day and they sound like garbage and I listen another day and they sound like the best music. Where's the truth in it? It definitely drove me to the brink of insanity, but I love the album."

Her brain has always been like this, they say: "I have a very restless, anxious mind, but the positive side is that I am always writing and always creative. That's the silver lining."

It's important for Ashnikko to work with people who get it. They've been making music with producer Slinger since 2020.

"Musically, he just gets me better than anyone else and the way we approached this was incredibly collaborative," Ashnikko says.

The same goes for songwriter Oscar Scheller, who also worked on the record, and guest stars Daniela Lalita and Ethel Cain too.

"Ethel Cain is such a world builder and a mythmaker and so is Daniela," says Ashnikko. "Both of them lent their talents to the story."

One artist who doesn't contribute is Ashnikko's partner Arlo Parks. Ashnikko says that Parks was an inspiration here and there, but beyond that politely explains that they don't talk about each other in interviews.

Ashnikko's tale really began with the Hi, It's Me EP in 2019. A few singles were earmarked for release from the set, but it was one that wasn't that blew up on TikTok. At the time, Ashnikko didn't even have a TikTok account and recalls with semi-bafflement the occasion when someone pointed out the song Stupid was rapidly getting a high amount of views.

"Some random person was like, 'Look what's happening on TikTok' after it had 1,000 views. I was like, 'Oh cool...'"

The song made Ashnikko one of the first TikTok superstars, its success soon spreading onto Spotify and YouTube, too.

"It was strange," she recalls. "I was looking at my phone like, 'What the fuck is happening?' It was growing so fast. It was very weird. I think I got lucky. Now, every record label under the sun is like, 'Oh my God, you should make a TikTok trend, you should engage on TikTok'. 'Engage on TikTok' is my trigger phrase. But I got away with it somehow by not interacting."

In the wake of that success, Shepherd says that Ashnikko did the right thing by engaging with the platform by completely being themself.

"They didn't chase trends, they didn't try to start viral moments, they realised, 'I know how to speak to my audience,'" he says. "That's the big thing missing in pop, the honesty, whether it's calling out the problems with underrepresented people or the LGBTQ community, or being completely honest with their opinions. I think people buy into that."

> "At first, I was excited by Ashnikko's ideas and that they weren't relying on anyone else"
>
> **GEORGE SHEPHERD**
> **VARIOUS ARTISTS MANAGEMENT**

In for the kill: *The Weedkiller album artwork, which Ashnikko says is inspired by "nature worship"*

ROLE CALL
MEET TEAM ASHNIKKO

Management: George Shepherd, Matt Luxon, David Bianchi (Various Artists Management)
Label: Parlophone
CEO & Chairman: Tony Harlow
President: Joe Kentish
MD: Jennifer Ivory
A&R: George Shepherd (VAM)/ Sophie Ray (Parlophone)
Marketing: Anna Turunen, Anya Du Sauzay
Digital Marketing: Charlie Martin & WMA
Publisher: Warner Chappell
Agents: Andy Nees, Chris Payne, Michael Coughlin & Cristina Baxter (WME)
Print & Online Press: Tom Mehrtens, Mofe Sey & Claire Coulton (Satellite 414)
Radio: Grace O'Neill
TV: Natalie Nichols
Creative Director: Vasso Vu
Creative Commissioners: Imran Malik & Sam Seager

Ashnikko doesn't look back on the era with entirely positive memories, though. She describes the trajectory as weird: bypassing the sweatbox venues and a few rungs on the ladder to be fast-tracked to the pop major leagues.

"Artists get to play the smaller rooms and work their way up," they say. "But the pandemic coupled with how my career just exploded randomly was a very drastic change in my life, one that I was not super prepared for. I remember 2019 into 2020 being very difficult for me, grappling with what was expected of me and how I was supposed to be."

Before that, she says, making music was fun. Almost overnight, it had become a business.

"I wasn't prepared," Ashnikko recalls. "I didn't have the skills to be anyone's boss or to have that level of expectation on my shoulders. But I am getting there. It's a process."

It wasn't just in the real world. Online, too, everything suddenly changed.

"Having a relative loss of anonymity online was a very strange thing," she continues. "I'm super grateful that it happened, I get to make the art that I want to make, I get to work with people that I love, but it was really weird."

Ashnikko reckons that being an artist in the 2020s is like having two full-time jobs, one encompassing all the things that musicians have always done, the other being a social media expert.

"It's so all-encompassing and it's so demanding," they say. "You've gotta be an editor, marketing person, musician, visual creative. It's a lot of hats and I don't know if I've mastered them. I'm still working with mastering how to use social media to my benefit. I always feel like I got real lucky at the beginning."

But, from the outside, it feels like Ashnikko nailed that balancing act, an artist who had that TikTok breakthrough and built on it, amassing a body of work for the ever-increasing diehards to dive into. This isn't a career that hinges on a singular viral moment, it's become a fully-formed world taking in singles, EPs, mixtapes, live extravaganzas and flamboyant aesthetics. How did Ashnikko do it?

"I don't know! I scream and cry a lot," they confess. "My brain is full of car exhaust. I work 24/7, I'm a workaholic."

Protecting the environment is a key thread of Weedkiller's dystopian themes, and recently Ashnikko was talking with a friend about how to balance wanting to tour the world with also wanting to help the climate. They have not discovered the answer yet.

"I'm not an expert on running a sustainable business," she offers. "I'm merely just asking the questions and trying to improve my business, and be more thoughtful about, if I'm selling physical products, where those materials are coming from, who's making them and how. At the end of the day, running a sustainable business is very inaccessible and very expensive. Touring and trying to be environmentally conscious are two things that don't really go into that, honestly. Running a green tour or routing a tour to be green is something I can't afford right now. It's very hard."

For Ashnikko, writing a good song and playing a good show are sister points of the creative process. They call it their "two beacons of light".

"I love being on stage, I love the energetic exchange between me and a crowd," she says.

They often wonder what aliens would make of gigs if they came down to earth. "They'd be like, 'What is this magic? What are you guys doing?!' Everyone's in the same room, their heartbeats are syncing up, they're moving their body to the same rhythm, they're singing the same words. It really is ritual magic."

Joe Kentish says that Ashnikko is a great example of what he wants the new era of Parlophone to represent.

"It's artists that have a clear creative direction of their own, artists that have a global ambition and artists that are keen to work with a partner to get there," he says. "I'm really clear about the sort of mindset and the attitude of artists that we want to work with. It's about having a really well-curated roster of artists who share goals with us. That's what I hope that the new regime will come to mean."

Warner is the right place for them, Kentish adds, because of the company's success at exporting artists from the UK to the rest of the world at the highest global level.

"Ashnikko has an American background but has been based in part here," he says. "It's definitely a priority from them and management to be successful on the global stage."

David Bianchi thinks that the biggest challenge has been getting the wider music industry to understand that this is an alt act and not a "middle of the road pop act".

"There's a temptation to find an artist like Ashnikko, who's essentially a punk rock person who's coming at it from a very archaic left of centre place, and I think people want to take that kind of thing and turn it into something very cookie cutter," he offers. "We've spent 18 months or so arguing with people that perhaps Ashnikko knows what's better for them than a bunch of middle-aged men."

When George Shepherd started managing Ashnikko, he says there wasn't any editorial support across the DSPs at all.

"We got to 50, 100 million streams and had to be like, 'People are coming to your platform and consuming this,'" he says. "They were like, 'We don't have a place for it at the moment.' At that point, it was genre-based or mood-based for all of the DSPs, so suddenly there's a lane that you sit in on your own. That's a positive, but it also means sometimes the entry point is a little more difficult."

Shepherd sees success as being a "full-court press". Their initial reluctance long since passed, and he says the DSPs have each played a part in helping amplify Ashnikko's output.

"We saw, off the back of TikTok, the songs that didn't have videos increased their Spotify streams exponentially," he says. A brand partnership with Beats and Apple for Daisy, meanwhile, helped to raise the track's profile.

"We've also done sessions with Deezer and Amazon that have supported us in different ways," he adds.

Internationally, Shepherd says that the US is Ashnikko's biggest territory, but Latin America is also huge.

"When you think about the touring, it's [surprising] that Ash has done one UK tour and one North American tour and has never played a show in Europe outside of festivals," says Shepherd. "For this campaign, it's all the things we weren't able to do on the Demidevil tour. We went from 300 tickets at the Pickle Factory to the Forum and our next show is at Ally Pally – that's skipping some crazy steps."

Success is not just selling lots of records, which would be nice, but also everything getting a boost, states Shepherd.

"It's all about, have we toured more places than before?" he says. "Have we sold more tickets? Has the record been consumed by not only her audience but another audience? Whatever that transcends, whether that's triple platinum in Brazil or whatever, that's success."

Joe Kentish thinks it's entirely possible for Weedkiller to be Ashnikko's big crossover moment.

Blue streak: *Ashnikko with (top, L-R) partner Arlo Parks and Mahalia and (bottom) backstage at Coachella this year*

"I don't think there's a prescribed easy way of getting there by making obviously broad and commercial music," he says. "I think you have to follow where the creativity takes you if you're an artist like Ashnikko and I think absolutely you can reach a broader audience."

As for Ashnikko's own relationship with data and streaming figures, there isn't one.

"I let George pay attention to those numbers," she says. "I try not to because I won't be able to make music if I'm depressed and looking at the numbers makes me depressed. The charts don't matter to me because I care for my mental health above everything else."

Ashnikko's management team treats them very respectfully, they say.

"They know I'm the captain of the ship and they let me set my own working hours and they guide me where they can," they explain. "We make a very good team."

Experiencing the long arm of the music industry has taught Ashnikko about the importance of establishing boundaries in how she navigates it.

"I'm writing my own timeline," they declare. "There is no one way to become a full-time musician or, to quote, 'make it' – whatever that means. Trying to find balance in my life is how I navigate the industry and not listen to other people when they're like, 'You've got to do this!' I'm gonna do what makes me comfortable and happy."

That means listening to their body when it's on the cusp of burnout.

"I get really sick when I'm burnt out," they say. "My body tells me, 'Hey, you need to slow down or else you're going to be unwell all year and physically unable to play shows,' which is the best part of being a musician for me, so you can't even enjoy the good stuff."

"I have a pretty holistic relationship with Ash so you understand how they cope with workloads and when they need a rest period," says manager Shepherd. "It's something you have to be aware of. Within the Warner system and with the help of Tony Harlow, I've pushed for free support to therapists to make sure people can get help. I think it's something the music industry has neglected for a long time."

As a gender fluid, pansexual artist, Ashnikko is an icon to the queer community but they don't see themselves as its representative, more a member of the collective whole.

"I feel like a part of that community," they say. "I think feeling like a role model is a slippery slope into feeling like you have all the answers, which I don't, I'm still just figuring myself out. I feel so honoured that people can listen to my music and find meaning in it."

If Ashnikko could give advice to a young queer artist embarking on their own music career, it would be that no one knows you better than you. Everyone is guessing.

"Everyone's just making shit up as they go along," she says. "So don't watch what other people are doing. You know yourself the best, try and stay true to that."

With that, it's almost time for Ashnikko's train to leave. Huge things are on the horizon for this alt-pop superstar-in-waiting, but right now there is an escape to be had and a solstice to celebrate.

So, finally, we ask, who is Ashnikko away from the intense glare of fans and followers?

"I'm just a little goblin creature prancing through the forest," they say, happily heading through the gates and off on another fantastical adventure.

> "Artists have to follow their creativity, and I think Ashnikko can reach a broader audience by doing that"
>
> **JOE KENTISH WARNER RECORDS**

PHOTOS: David M Benett, Emma McIntyre

"The charts don't matter to me because I care for my mental health above everything else"

ASHNIKKO

THE Music Week INTERVIEW

MELVIN BENN

Getting an audience with Melvin Benn during a busy festival summer is no easy feat, but in the wake of Festival Republic's Music Week Awards win for Reading & Leeds 2022, the company's MD knew that a celebration was in order. So, too, was an examination of the myriad issues facing the live business in 2023 and a discussion of Benn's position as one of the sector's public faces. Here, *Music Week* meets him to talk breaking talent, the grassroots problem, representation and more...

WORDS: NIALL DOHERTY **PHOTOS:** PAUL HARRIES

During festival season, Melvin Benn is required to be everywhere at once. The Festival Republic MD's day usually begins at 5.30am – sometimes before – when he begins powering through a monster to-do list and fielding calls from his teams, his working day running easily through until 11.30pm.

"It's a busy time," he says, checking in on Zoom from Worthy Farm. It's a few days before Glastonbury, where Benn operates as director, but that's far from the only event on his mind.

"Festivals have become very much a thing of today and the future and when I say that, I mean I might be sat on one festival site dealing with all sorts of things at a particular festival," he says. "But then I have teams of people at the moment on site at Finsbury Park, Marlay Park in Dublin, Malahide Castle in Dublin and Latitude. It's that thing where you're in one place but you're also in another."

Benn's mind isn't just spread across space, it's pushing forward in time, too. As well as discussing situations with his staff about next week and the week after, he also spends much of his days talking to his talent buyers regarding future festival line-ups. "My chairman and I talk to our talent buyers every day about talent for '24 and '25," he explains.

Despite his hectic existence, the 67-year-old says he springs out of bed every day. He loves what he does, and good job considering it doesn't sound like he has much time for anything else. As a key figure in almost every major UK festival – Festival Republic also stage Reading & Leeds, Download, Wilderness, Electric Picnic and Wireless, as well as putting on one-day events at Gunnersbury Park and Crystal Palace Park and also overseeing Irish event Electric Picnic – Benn is very much the Godfather of modern British festivals.

He's still basking in the glory of Reading & Leeds winning Festival Of The Year at the Music Week Awards back in May, but it's not in Benn's nature to look back too much. He's all about making the next event even better.

Talking to him, you get the sense that Reading & Leeds have the edge when it comes to which events mean the most to him. No wonder, Benn took over running it way back in 1989.

"For me, Reading and Leeds are the best music festivals around in that sense, meaning that they really are pure music festivals," he states. "It's a very young audience, the most optimistic audience. Reading and Leeds is the festival of the future. They've just finished their GCSEs or their A-Levels, they're our future doctors, politicians, nurses, police officers, engineers and scientists. None of them necessarily know who they're going to be, but I love the fact that so many of them will end up in really amazing positions in their lives and will have gone to Reading and Leeds at the cusp of their adulthood and, I'm certain, in the main will have really fond memories of it."

The fact that it's an audience that he says are "absolutely on fire with enthusiasm for life and for the festival and for music" is what Benn thinks gives Reading & Leeds its vibe of exuberance and adventure, that youthful spirit vital to its DNA.

"Every festival has a sense of community, a festival should engender a sense of community and Reading and Leeds is very much among my favourite communities," he smiles.

He looks back at last year's "incredible" line-up with pride, a roll call of artists that struck gold for everything you'd want from a contemporary festival – a mix of blockbuster names, headline debuts and game-changing performances from a diverse array of acts.

Benn describes Dave's show-stopping turn, which saw him become the event's youngest ever headliner, as extraordinary.

"I witnessed that crowd and his performance in Reading – he had them in his hands," he says. "It was the most mature performance from a single artist. He was the youngest ever headline act we'd ever had at Reading. It reminded me of Foo Fighters playing, of Radiohead playing, of Rage Against The Machine playing in the sense of its gravitas, its importance. It blew me away how good it was."

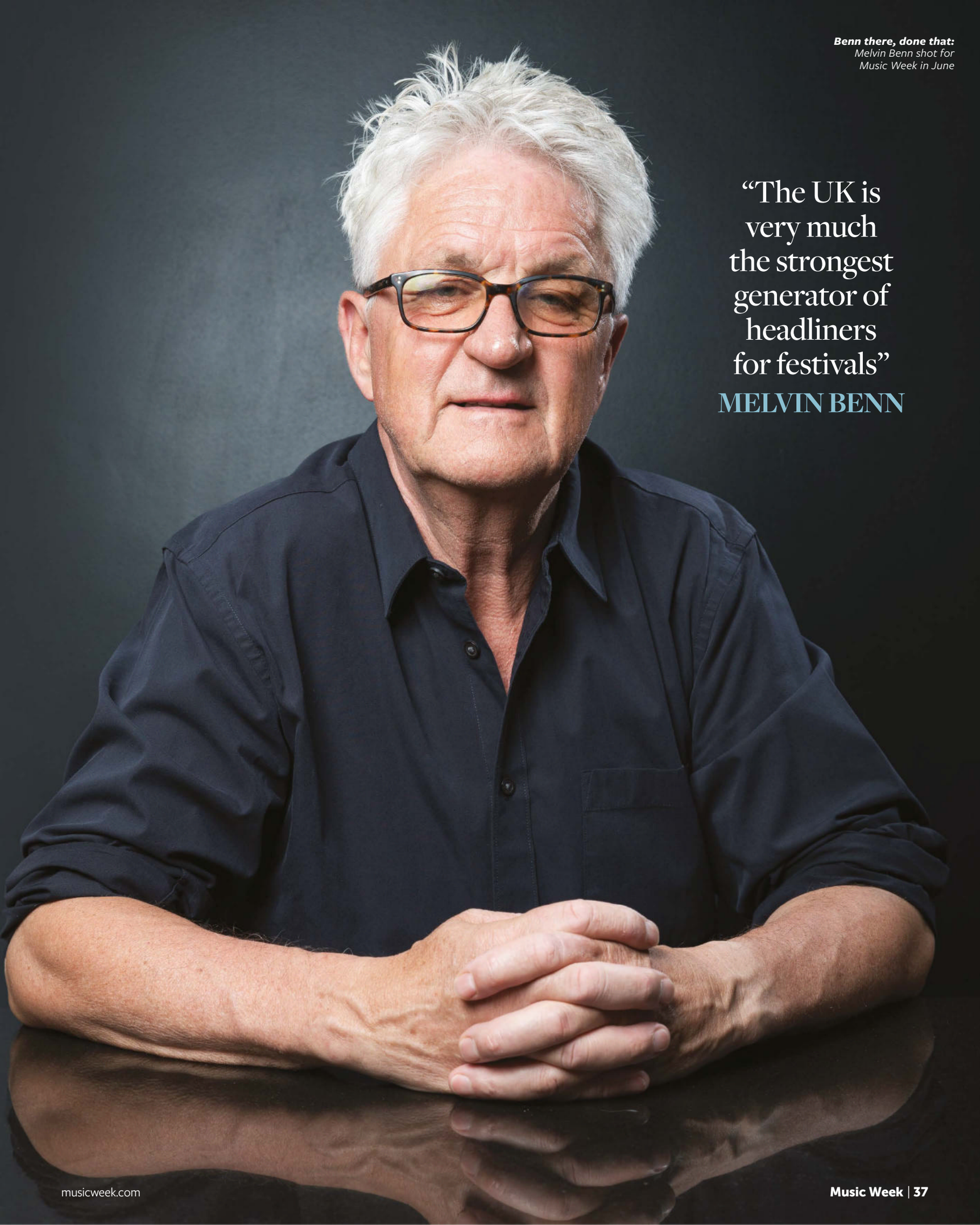
Megan Thee Stallion's headline appearance on the Main Stage West felt like another milestone for an event that, like many others in recent years, has attracted its share of criticism for the diversity of its line-up.

"The first ever Black female headliner in the co-headline position," he says. "There were lots of important moments for us musically as well as cultural moments for the kids that were there as well."

He also namechecks Bring Me The Horizon's first ever headline performance at a major festival as being important, and then rhapsodises about Arctic Monkeys and what they mean to Reading.

"They are 100% on message in that sense and it was perfect," he says. "They're no longer just four lads from Sheffield, they've become much more than that."

But, as we said, it's not Benn's natural position to get wrapped up in past glories, and so we settle down for a discussion about where he's at in his career, the issue of representation and, firstly, who might be grabbing the headlines this year...



Benn there, done that: *Melvin Benn shot for Music Week in June*

"The UK is very much the strongest generator of headliners for festivals"

MELVIN BENN

"A single TikTok hit doesn't fill a set at a festival – artists need much more than that"
MELVIN BENN

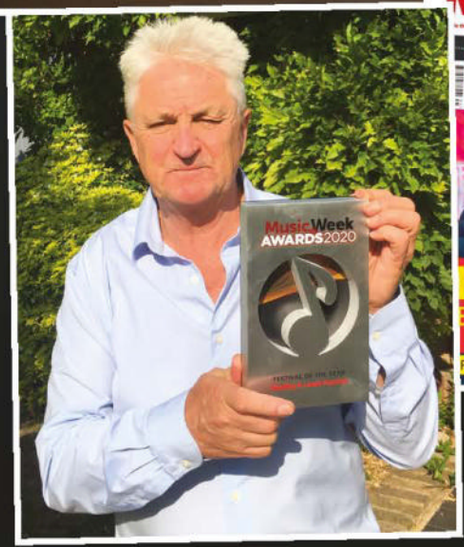
Looking ahead to Reading & Leeds in August, what do you expect will be the stories of this year's festival?
"I think Billie Eilish is just unbelievable, and I think Central Cee will turn out to be a big, big winner for us – what he's doing is pretty amazing."

Did 2022 make for a tough act to follow when it came to booking this year's headliners, which don't match up in terms of representation?
"I think every year is difficult in that sense. We clearly have to book according to what is available and what's relevant. The two things that really govern it are the relevance and the availability. Acts are not working all of the time. There are a lot of variables going into what is available to people at any one time. In truth, it's never an easy thing to book a festival, literally no matter what the festival."

Did you anticipate a backlash to this year's headliners in terms of the reduced diversity compared to 2022's line-up?
"Yeah, of course, that will be inevitable in that sense. But as I say, we worked really hard to get full diversity, especially women headlining. If they're not working and they're not touring, it is just impossible and the reality is there's just less women available to headline festivals. That's the reality of it. We're working to change that, we work really hard on other festivals, on smaller festivals to give people an opportunity to be taking those steps up but, at the same time, artists take those opportunities when they're ready for it and if they're male or female, black or white, the artists take the opportunities when they're ready. If they take the opportunities when they're not ready, it may not be good for their careers and we have to be careful of that, too."

There has never been so much focus on representation on festival line-ups as there is now. Do you think it's right that the live sector should be publicly scrutinised or is it unfairly under the spotlight?
"We are scrutinised not just unfairly but singularly unfairly. In the main, as music promoters, what we do is endeavour to put on the stage what people are listening to. If we put things on the stage that people are not going to listen to, and are not listening to, they're not going to buy the tickets. As promoters, we're relatively simple creatures, our dedicated aim is to give the ticket buyer what they want to come and see, it's a really simple philosophy. We as festivals and as music promoters tend to reflect the audience tastes, rather than direct the audience tastes. Radio has a greater ability to direct audience tastes than we have, we can only reflect them."

What advice would you give to artists about getting on the pathway to becoming a headliner?
"I'm almost the last person to give artists any advice, I wouldn't be able to play the bloody triangle, never mind anything else. God help anybody that had to listen to me sing. But I've always just had the simple belief that treading the boards and performing is how you build up an audience and a fanbase."



Won Republic: *(Clockwise from top) The Festival Republic team onstage at the Music Week Awards 2023, Melvin Benn on our cover in 2018, Benn posing with Music Week's Festival Of The Year Award in 2020*

Do you think the UK is generating enough headline talent at the moment versus what's coming out of the US?
"The answer to that has to be yes. Two out of the three Glastonbury headliners are UK acts, three out of six at Reading and Leeds are UK acts, three out of the three at Latitude are UK acts, three out of the three at Wilderness are UK acts, well one's French albeit UK-based [Christine & The Queens]. If you look across festivals as a whole, there are more UK headliners than US headliners. Wireless has a greater propensity of US artists than UK artists because of the nature of the music. But if I was to look across all of the festival headline positions, the UK is very much the strongest generator of headliners."

To what degree is TikTok hype a consideration for booking now alongside chart and touring success?
"A huge hit associated with a TikTok performance for new artists is massive for them, and it is really important exposure, more and more so. But a single TikTok hit doesn't fill a set at a festival. They need much more than that. That's why I go back to the idea that artists need time in front of audiences to learn the craft. If you look at artists like The 1975, who amazingly stepped in for us last year [after Rage Against The Machine pulled out two weeks before Reading & Leeds] and were just outstanding, they couldn't have done that on the back of a TikTok. They did that on the back of constantly working on performing and writing songs and learning who their audience are. TikTok is really important, but it's not the be-all and end-all."

You really led the line during Covid in terms of interactions with the government. Now we're a few years down the line, how do you rate the way the industry and government interact and what could be improved in your opinion?
"It's an interesting one. Live music promoters, record labels and A&R people, agents, managers... I don't think we're automatically isolationist, but I don't think we're natural collaborators. We're people that just want to get on and do what we want to do. Yes, I did spend probably more time haranguing the government than any other single person certainly within our sector, I think I did. We would sit on Zoom meetings week in, week out. We learned to work with government in a way that we didn't know we could, we learned the names of people in the DCMS, and other government departments, and special advisers to this person and that person. But keeping that going is really hard because we're back on our own track again now and so we're very much doing our own thing. We've got the LIVE Group and that's become of some use, but it's hard to engage with government at the moment because there's crisis after crisis about who the government is. Also, we're really busy and so talking to government is not our first thought when we wake up. It was during Covid, because that was the only way we could get back open."

So what is your first thought when you wake up?
"'How long is the list?' In fairness, I really do love getting up in the morning, I can't wait for the day to start. It's probably not much of a surprise that the first thing I do is check my emails, because people are working all over the clock or in different parts of the world. My first thought is generally, 'What's going to get the next show on the road?'"

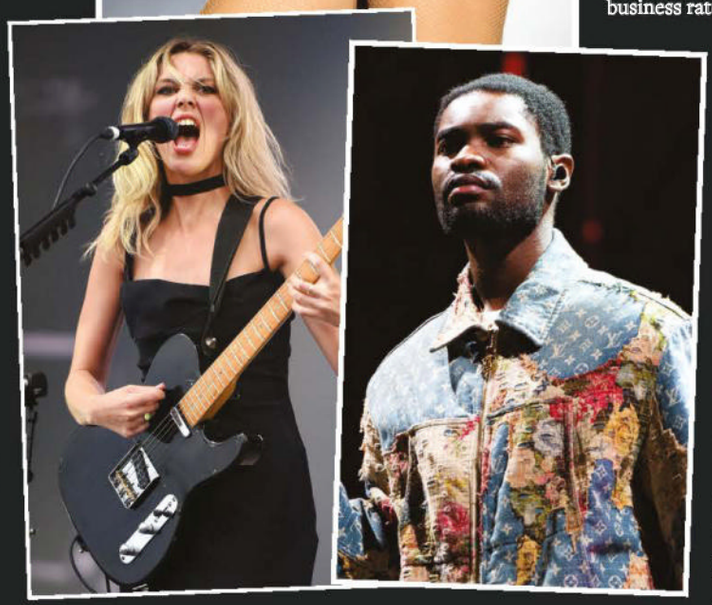
PHOTOS: Matthew Baker, Joseph Okpako, Getty

Can you let us in on what actually motivates you to still be at the very top of your game after all these years?
"I just love what I do, I get the opportunity to create amazing festivals. I can't stand still, it's not my nature. I want to make things better every single year, every single festival. One of the things that I've tried to do is constantly try to push the envelope, push things forward. This year at Reading & Leeds and Download, I've introduced these new initiatives in the campsite called AIR Hubs, which is Assistance, Information and Response. That was really because I always spend a lot of my time wandering the campsites and the arenas and I do that because if I don't, I don't see what the punters are seeing. The AIR Hubs are a new thing within a campsite that is just moving things on and offering better customer service."

When was the last time you did one of your festival walkabouts and didn't like what you saw?
"Oh, trust me, there's something I see that I don't like every day. It might be as simple as a tent peg not put in properly. It might be a security person with their hands in their pockets. It's little things like that, I don't want to employ security with their hands in their pockets. It doesn't work for me. Maybe it doesn't make them any better or worse than having their hands out of their pockets, but I think it says an awful lot."

A big part of the Reading & Leeds 2022 campaign was not just the line-up, but the progressive environmental values it exhibited. What else is Festival Republic doing right now to make your events greener?
"My big push at the moment, as well as all the usual stuff, is to get mains electricity into the festival sites. What was previously the Guest Campsite at Reading is actually going to become a new Academy school and that's given us a real opportunity with the power companies, because they need major electricity to come into the school that isn't there at the moment and we're able to work with them to get major electricity into there. Then I'm looking at solar panels and wind turbines for Leeds. It's much more rural and getting mains power is a little more challenging. Single use plastic is gone, we're going to canned water as opposed to water in plastic bottles, we feel very positive about that. It's ongoing. Obviously, festivals are by no means the biggest emitters of carbon in general society terms, but at the same time, we have a responsibility to be doing our bit in the same way that everybody else should have that responsibility. I do think that we are trying to lead in that sense."

So do you feel that the rest of the music industry is being as proactive as you are?
"I do, yeah. I don't see any aspects of the industry that isn't becoming proactive, touring bands are doing it the same. I was at Depeche Mode's show in Malahide Castle in Dublin and they've got sustainability at the heart of their tour, they've got a sustainability person travelling with them. I think the whole industry is recognising it because the whole world has to recognise it. This isn't a debate anymore."



Simply the fest: *(Clockwise from top) Megan Thee Stallion, Dave and Wolf Alice playing Reading & Leeds 2022*

The grassroots part of the sector is not in such good shape. What can big companies like Festival Republic do to help, can they do more?
"Well, if you look at the pipeline, I don't think there's any better place to see that pipeline growing and developing than at many festivals, my festivals in particular. At Reading, Leeds and Latitude, we always have a BBC Introducing stage, acts that are quite often without a label, quite often without management and giving them that opportunity for professionals in the industry that are at festivals to look at them, for festival-goers to listen to them and watch them. I think we as festivals do an enormous amount to help develop emerging acts."

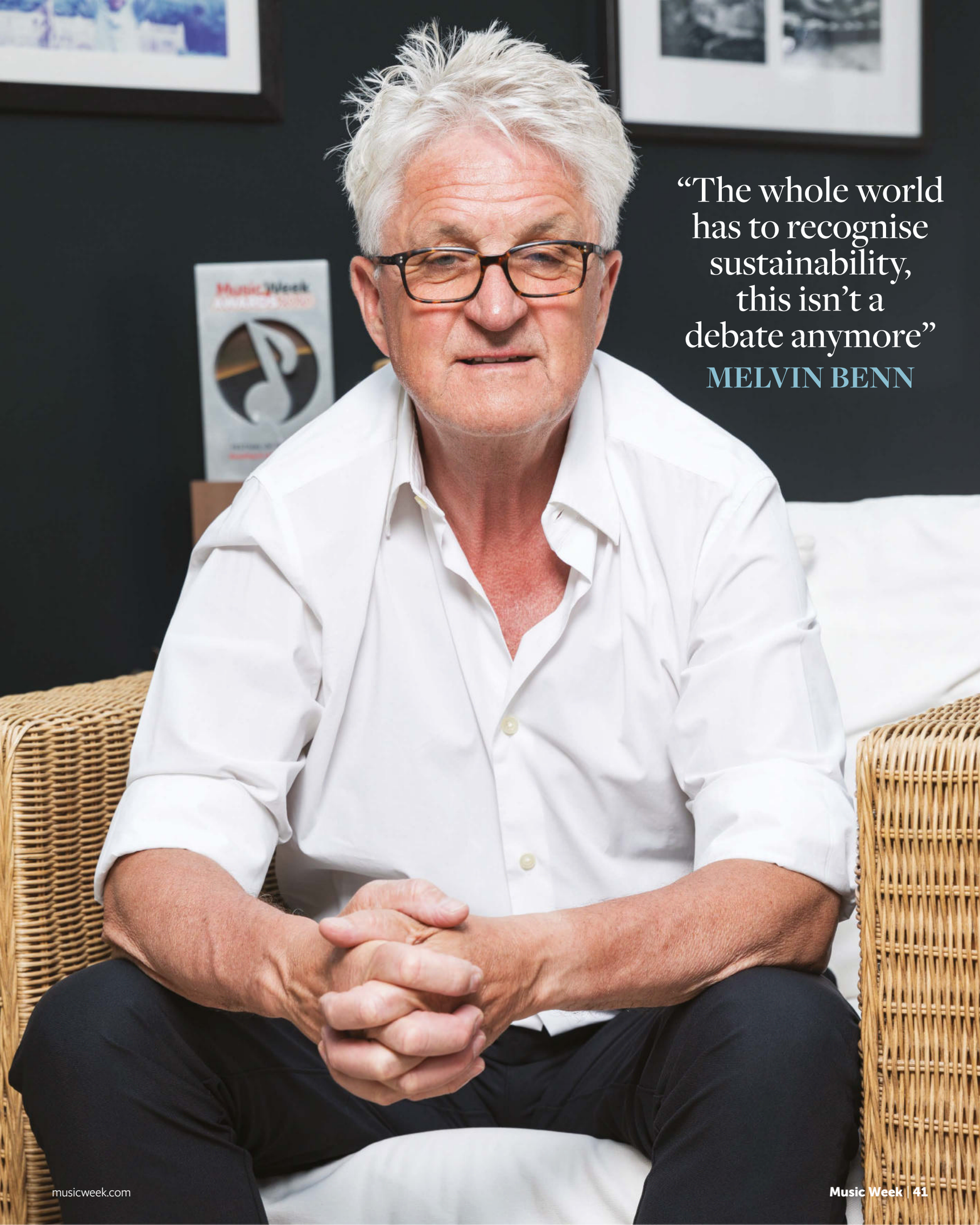
But do you worry about the smaller venues where those acts should be playing when they're not at festivals?
"I do and I don't. I'm pretty brutal about things. No venue, no festival, no act has a God-given right to exist. It has to work for its right to exist, it has to work for its right to be relevant. I think what the smaller venues are doing is really, really important – that opportunity for acts to come through is really, really important. Unfortunately, for a lot of the smaller venues, the business rates are impossible to deal with, the increasing issues around inflation are really difficult to deal with. Should they get subsidies? I don't know, that's not my world. I've never had a subsidy in my life. What I do know is that I've had to fight tooth and nail for everything that I've ever put on and I don't know anything any other way. As I say, I don't think a venue has a God-given right to exist. I think it has to work its relevance to the town that it's sat in. That's my take on it."

There was lots of work done on disability and access at R&L last year too. Where does the live business, and festivals in particular, need to improve in this regard?
"I don't think there are any festivals that do it badly, if I'm being honest with you. I think sometimes festivals get it wrong for their customers with disabilities but sometimes they get it wrong for their customers without disabilities as well. I don't think any festival is blasé about the needs of people with disabilities. At Reading & Leeds and Latitude, I'm really proud of all the work that we do there. We have a dedicated teams working with people with disabilities, we know the individual disabilities of people that are coming, we try to ensure that we've got all of their relevant needs catered for. Usually we manage that, sometimes it doesn't happen as well as we want, but usually we manage it."

How different is it to put on a festival now compared to 10 years ago?
"In a way, it's no different and quite a lot different. The level of paperwork and transparency about paperwork, and the level of liaison and discussion with local authorities and blue light agencies, the level of liaison and discussion with the festival-goers, the bands, it's just gone up tenfold. It goes up every single year and that doesn't make it harder, it just makes it more detailed and when it's getting more detailed, it's getting better. So my view is the level of work has grown exponentially but I think it's made the festivals better. It's not harder, it's just more detail, more work."

Finally, what does the future hold for you? How long are you going to keep being at the forefront of festivals
"Am I at the forefront of festivals?! I didn't know! Then it was very short-lived if I am! If Manchester United were willing to offer me a contract as their new left-back, I might throw the towel in. Other than that, I don't think anything will keep me away."

PHOTOS: Matthew Baker, Joseph Okpako, Getty


"The whole world has to recognise sustainability, this isn't a debate anymore"
MELVIN BENN

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CURATED BY GIR'S CARLA MARIE WILLIAMS

MENTOR ME

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND SUCCESSFUL WOMEN ACROSS THE MUSIC AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SHARE THEIR TOP 5 CAREER LESSONS...

AMZYOBR (PHOTOGRAPHER)

Amran Abdi, otherwise known as AmzyOBR, is a London-based photographer who has photographed a range of artists and global figures including Doja Cat, Cardi B and Meghan Markle. Having started her career as a YouTuber, AmzyOBR is now making a name for herself in the industry and recently shot the King's Coronation Concert. As a Muslim woman in a male-dominated field keen to inspire other creatives, AmzyOBR also created the platform Future Culture X, a community where artists can exchange ideas and connect. Here, AmzyOBR gives *Music Week* her Top 5 tips on entering the world of photography...

1. Start with basic equipment

"New cameras are being launched everyday, with bigger sensors and better processing powers. Whilst we all want bigger and better gear, always remember that it's not the camera that makes the photographer, it's you. I started off with an iPhone and learnt how to take images on that before moving on to a compact camera. You should know how to use the equipment to create the image you have in your head, that's one of the basic photography tips, which is obvious but hard to practise. You can begin practising shooting with your phone, regular cameras or with a DSLR."

2. Learn the essentials

"Camera settings are an essential element of photography that you need to master. Exposure is the key to taking a great picture. Learn all there is to learn and don't be afraid to use YouTube. Aperture, shutter speed and ISO create an exposure. All three settings, when combined, control the amount of light reaching the sensor of your camera. Find the correct balance of these settings before taking a picture. A photography guide which explains the basic concept of aperture, shutter speed and ISO will help you to apply these creatively in your journey ahead. Don't be afraid to ask fellow photographers. I did, and I've learnt so much."

3. Practise, practise, practise!

"I cannot emphasise the importance of practising enough. You will feel like you can't because you don't know how to at first, but if you don't practise, how will you ever learn? Most of my greatest shots came from accidents and trying things out. Pick up that camera and shoot, you'll be surprised at what you stumble across. Practise with friends and have fun!"

4. Be true to yourself

"Being yourself is all about knowing what you believe in and the values that you live by. When you are not yourself, you will take on the values and beliefs of others. This is when you start conforming to other people's expectations and ways of thinking, and we are not on this earth to please people. I was told at the start of my journey that I took rubbish pictures, but I kept going and did my thing. Now look at me! If I can do it, so can you – be unapologetically yourself. You need to have a great amount of courage when you decide to take the path that goes against the crowd, the reason why people often take the wider path is because it's easy. The challenge of always being yourself and establishing your own identity takes inner strength, but if you do, you'll be able to handle whatever comes your way."

5. Be inspired by others

"Feeling inspired by other creatives can play a key role in unlocking creativity, increasing productivity and boosting happiness. People who regularly get inspiration from other artists tend to be more engaged, confident and motivated to solve problems and create new concepts. This can also build strong relationships with people. I've made so many friends who I've looked up to and it's helped me go further in my career because we are all here for one another. Inspiration allows us to go beyond our own experiences and limitations."

"Pick up that camera and shoot, you'll be surprised what you come across"
AmzyOBR

INTERVIEW: Miranda Bardsley **PHOTO:** @aeyscamera

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Life Skills

Not many artist careers begin with a shout-out from **Ed Sheeran** and a major deal at 13, but **Mahalia**'s did. Now, with more than a decade of industry experience in the bank, the UK R&B star is primed for the release of her emotional second album **IRL** and her first proper crack at the mainstream. Here, joined by **Atlantic**'s **Ed Howard** and **Metallic Inc**'s **Radha Medar**, the singer talks breaking big, finding solace in music and what's next for her beloved genre...

WORDS: ANNA FIELDING **PHOTOS:** SIRUI MA

Everyone in this industry knows that overnight success stories are rarely what they seem. There are often years of grafting, perfecting and deciding. In Mahalia's case, there's more than a decade. But she's more than fine with that, after all, she's still only 25.

"I think there are a lot of people who probably know who I am and what I do, but I wouldn't say I've broken out yet," she says, speaking to *Music Week* from an AirBnB in the Bushwick neighbourhood of Brooklyn, wearing a grey hoodie and black-framed glasses. "And I must admit, that's quite nice, I'm doing some promo here in the States and I get described as an up-and-coming artist. It gives me more room and alleviates some of the pressure."

The promo is part of the run-up to her second album, IRL, due on July 14 via Atlantic. Lead single Terms And Conditions (which has 4.5 million plays on Spotify, where the singer has 3.5 million monthly listeners) dropped in April and a UK and European tour will follow in the autumn.

The campaign for her first album, 2019's Love And Compromise (50,283 sales, according to the Official Charts Company), ended up being cut somewhat short by the pandemic, although she was named on the BBC's Sound Of 2019 list and has since won three MOBOs as well as being nominated at the Grammys, BRITs and the Ivor Novello Awards.

> "Mahalia has a unique talent and we have always known something wonderful would happen"
> **ED HOWARD ATLANTIC**

Mahalia has been working away from the age of 13, workshopping songs with Amy Wadge, who is a long-term collaborator of Ed Sheeran's and co-wrote Thinking Out Loud among many others. Wadge played some of Mahalia's work to Sheeran, who shared it via his social media. His support subsequently led to Mahalia signing with Atlantic/Asylum.

"Mahalia was a big fan of Ed Sheeran and had somehow found her way to working with Amy Wadge," says Atlantic co-president Ed Howard. "This was around the time of Ed's second album and we had said to him, 'Let us know if you come across any great artists and we can develop them together.' Although when Amy sent him Mahalia's music, he tweeted it out to the whole world instead of coming to us! But we were completely blown away. We met with Mahalia and her parents and saw her play in Camden, which was certainly one of the best unsigned shows I've ever seen. It was spellbinding."

Mahalia grew up in Syston, a small town in rural Leicestershire and both her parents are music industry professionals. Her father worked as a session player with Erasure and her mother was part of 4AD electronic band Colourbox. But despite, or perhaps because of that, they were determined she would finish school and have a normal teenage life.

"R&B is underrepresented in the UK, especially in the mainstream world"
MAHALIA

Meeting IRL: *Mahalia releases IRL on July 14*

“We need to change the business model, songwriters just aren’t getting paid”
MAHALIA

It paid off. Mahalia is confident, grounded, comfortable and when we talk she confides that she has just finished a session of therapy.

“Being signed from such a young age has certainly given me the time to figure out how to handle things in a smart business way,” she says. “But I also do think it’s taken some things from me. I don’t think I lost out as a kid and I know my parents tried really hard to ensure I had a buzzing personal life as well as a professional life. But, you know, part of me does always think, ‘Well, what if I hadn’t signed when I was a child? Would I have done something else? Would I have loved something else more?’ I don’t really know, because this has always been my life.”

Radha Medar, who manages Mahalia with Holly Rose at Metallic Inc, stresses the uniqueness of her act’s trajectory.

“With the new album, I really believe she’s made something magical and has kept her integrity whilst growing her fanbase, clocking up millions of streams and selling thousands of tickets across the UK and US,” she says. “It’s incredibly impressive for a 25-year-old who’s managed to maintain a 10+ year career in this ever-changing industry. She is a joy to work alongside.”

Well used to industry life, Mahalia is not afraid to speak out on issues she feels passionately about. At this year’s BRITs, the Best Pop/R&B Act category shortlisted Harry Styles, Dua Lipa, Sam Smith, Charli XCX and Cat Burns. The list drew criticism online, with Mahalia prominent among the dissenters.

“Desperately searching for the R&B act at the BRITs,” she tweeted when the shortlist was announced. She then wore a jacket painted with the words ‘Long Live R’n’B’ to the event, and later told the BBC: “There’s an idea that American R&B artists can be commercially successful, and we [in the UK] can’t. That conversation needs to become more positive. I just think it would be really powerful for R&B artists to have their own moment to shine.”

“I was actually very scared that night and didn’t want it to come off as too heavy,” she says now. “When the BRITs first announced there would be genre categories a couple of years ago, I was quite pleased. You would imagine that a lot of genres would start to get the love they’ve been waiting to see. But the merging of pop and R&B bothered me and a lot of other R&B artists. There is a crossover, R&B dominates the charts in the US and a lot of it has crossed over here. But merging the categories like that felt... A little bit silly. Because the genres do mix, but they’re in no way the same. And I think R&B is underrepresented in the UK, especially in the mainstream world, so this just makes it harder.”

Despite dedicated playlists at DSPs and breakout acts like FLO (BRITs Rising Star 2023 winners), UK R&B still needs to fight its corner, and Mahalia is a big part of the battle.

“I think what Mahalia is doing is really flying the flag for that,” says Ed Howard. “There are many artists in that sphere, but none of them are achieving the consistent level of

exposure and success that Mahalia is. She is just phenomenally talented, and with the upcoming new record she has built a beautiful world for herself."

IRL is an R&B record, but one with the genre's best instincts for magpie-ing other sounds and blending them into a shining whole. In this case, there are elements of soul and various 1970s influences.

Clearly, Mahalia is committed to pushing the genre forwards.

"You can tell, sonically, that I'm older," she says. "That I had more space to think."

When it comes to the thematic inspiration behind IRL, Mahalia explains that it was "born out of the pandemic".

Back in 2020, she couldn't tour, felt confused, lethargic and sluggish and decided to start penning new material.

"I was writing in a vacuum, I just wasn't experiencing anything," she says. "I was going through a break-up, but I wasn't [able to be] with other people."

The song IRL, from which the album takes its name, was linked to that period.

"But it's also the story of a 13-year old kid who wanted to write music and be on stage," she adds. "And how I got here to be the woman I am today."

She pushed for the album title, feeling that the song, "encapsulated everything I wanted to say on this record."

Manager Medar hopes the record can offer Mahalia a new start post-pandemic.

"It has definitely been a journey for Mahalia to put herself back together post-Covid to create a brand new body of work," she says. "Her life and career thrive on performing live and being in the same room as people, along with being able to write from experience, so for that to be taken away for two years while she was expected to create, was really difficult."

Mahalia also pushed for her own choices when it came to collaborators and featured guests on the record.

"I always find features rather difficult," she says. "I might want a certain voice, but can't figure out who has it. There are artists you reach out to who don't get back to you..."

The singer points out that she always thinks of features in an artistic sense, whereas labels, "kind of inevitably", are always thinking about strategy.

"I've been signed for so long that I know how the game works, but I also want things to feel organic," she says.

The cast of featured artists in IRL is very personal, but it is also a list that any exec would be happy to work with.

"I wanted to have a mix of the new kids and the kids that have been around and made their own moves," she says, talking about relative newcomers including the US singers Joyce Wrice and Destin Conrad. She has also written songs with singer and friend Raye and long-term collaborator Kojey Radical ("I'm always shocked by his brilliance and want more people out here in the States to experience that"). Then there was Stormzy, who features on the poignant November, which Mahalia describes as her version of "a classic wedding song".

"Well, he was always on my wish list," she smiles. "When I was growing up, everyone around me was listening to indie music like Arctic Monkeys, The Kooks and Jamie T. It wasn't until I moved to London that I started to explore the UK rap scene and Stormzy was the first I got into. He's fantastic, across everything he does, musically, visually and just as a person. He's exceptional. He's reached out to me a few times over the years, to do backing vocals and stuff like that, so there's a kind of big brother, little sister relationship there."

Having heard Stormzy sing on his last album, she was determined to have him do the same on hers.

She was equally thrilled to land US singer JoJo, who also started in music at a young age.

"I know she was huge in America, but as an eight or nine year old girl, she was also huge for me," she says. "She was on the TV I was watching, in the films, all over the music channels. I don't think my UK label team understood it. But asking her to be on the record and then getting her felt like my first major win."

"There are some pretty cool collaborations there," observes Ed Howard. "Mahalia is building out her world, but at the same time staying true to her R&B roots."

For Atlantic, IRL will benefit from both tried and tested routes and newer ways of thinking.

"With many artists at the moment, we're trying to place an emphasis on creativity and thinking about fans first and balancing that with really good quality promo and traditional work," says Howard, whose team won the A&R Award at the Music Week Awards in May [see page 56]. "We've built a really good rapport with Mahalia and all of the different parts of the media and DSPs. That's partly down to our team's great work and also her own affability, personality and talent. People want to support her. They like what she represents and how the music sounds."

Life skills: *Mahalia on stage at BST Hyde Park last year (top) and the IRL album art*

The direct-to-fan content will include short-form videos, and the team at the label are thinking about how to innovate.

"The ambition is to put someone in a light that really suits them and doesn't feel like they are trying to sell something," he says. "Because that's kind of boring and it doesn't even work."

The heavy lifting on social media is likely to fall to the Atlantic staff, at least judging from what Mahalia tell us.

"TikTok has made me feel so fucking out of touch," she says. "Like, what do all the buttons do? I mean, I can obviously use the app, but it makes it not about music, which is difficult. And every time I speak to an artist, well, we're all exhausted by it. I don't really understand how an app has become front-and-centre and such a way of measuring success."

The trick for Atlantic, says Howard, is using the available platforms to show Mahalia as she actually is.

"May is hilarious," he says, using Mahalia's nickname. "And if you've ever seen her live, she's quite irreverent. So how do you show that off without it feeling like you're trying to jump on a bandwagon? That's the conundrum."

A particularly successful activation was around the single Letter To Ur Ex, which was run as a prelude to the current album campaign as fans were invited to share their own letters to exes.

"Mahalia has bared her soul and this was an opportunity to reverse that and have fans do the same," says Howard.

Growing up, Mahalia started making music for a time-honoured reason: she was trying to impress someone she fancied.

"I'd been learning the guitar since I was 11, but I didn't really sing at school," she says. "I was also deep into poetry, so I'd speak my poems over my three chords that I could play. It was my dad who suggested giving them a melody. Anyway, my first ever song was called Let The World See The Light and it was entirely created to let an 11-year-old boy know that 11-year-old me fancied him. And I sang it in my Friday school assembly."

The boy in question was delighted and that early dose of positive feedback meant songwriting started to feel easy.

"I wrote another and then another," she smiles.

ROLE CALL
MEET TEAM MAHALIA

Management: Holly Rose, Radha Medar (Metallic Inc)
Label: Atlantic Records UK
CEO: Tony Harlow
Co-presidents: Ed Howard, Briony Turner
EVP/president of Black music: Austin Daboh
MD/president of promotions: Damian Christian
Director of marketing: Fay Hoyte
A&R: Andrew Mikkelsen
Marketing: Tia Friday, Thomas Barthen
Digital marketing: Arun Mohammed, Will Beardmore
Publisher: Kobalt Music Publishing
Agent: Chris Payne (WME)
Print & Online Press: Rachel Campbell (Wired PR)
Radio: Will Puxley, Mel Rudder
TV: Holly Marshall
Creative Directors: Daisy King, Luke Tipping

PHOTO: Dave J Hogan, Getty

A few years later, after Sheeran's recommendation, she crossed paths with Ed Howard. Upon signing, her advance allowed Mahalia's family to build a studio at home for her to work in.

"Things moved at the pace they had to," says Howard. "Her parents did a very good job of making sure she had the normal school experience. Additionally, she was very wary, rightfully, of releasing something before she had found her artistic voice."

There were added complications, including working around school holidays and making sure there were chaperones in place.

"Every time I was tempted to question if we were doing the right thing, it fell back to Mahalia having a unique and profound talent," says Howard. "We've always known that, sooner or later, something wonderful would happen. We felt responsible, but also very fulfilled."

For her part, Mahalia is mostly grateful for having grown up in the business.

"I'm able to have conversations I wouldn't be able to have if I'd started later in life," she says. "Not that 25 is late, but I understand how labels work and how publishing works, even things like taxes. Maybe if I were to finish my deal, I wouldn't sign again, maybe I would. It's nice to have the knowledge of how it works. And also, I think it's been really good for me to be able to figure out difficult conversations – a lot of being signed is talking to older men and being able to say no. I've learned how to do that."

Mahalia says the question of to sign or not to sign with a major is something many of her peers are considering more and more.

"I think that's becoming a universal thought amongst many of us, although I imagine being independent has many difficulties, because there's a lot of stuff people do that I don't even know [about]," she muses. "Raye is one of my very good friends and watching her come out of her label deal [with Polydor] and absolutely thrive on her own... You do wonder. I think about it in the same way that I think about every big life decision in my life, or every crossroads. I've been with Atlantic for 12 years. A lot of people that started at the label with me are still there now. I have a lot of good relationships there, so a lot of it is personal for me. [Ed Howard] is like my dad."

Indeed, Mahalia acknowledges that it's "pretty crazy" to still have the person who signed her at the label.

"It must be quite strange for him to have known me from when I was 13 to now, at 25," she says. "We went out for a drink the other day and that was crazy too. He's a father figure to me in the industry and that's what I mean when I talk about going solo. There are all these people who have really stuck by me. The idea of leaving Ed would be very difficult."

She also speaks fondly of Atlantic co-president Briony Turner.

"It's great, there being two of them now," says Mahalia. "There are some things I talk to Briony about and some things I talk to Ed about. I've always been very close to Ed. But it's nice to have a woman up top, another woman in the room."

Mahalia is very keen on nurturing others and passing on what she has learned, both professionally and personally, and hopes that IRL will cast her in a mentor or big sister role to her fans.

"In another life I would have liked to be a teacher," she says.

She also runs Mahalia Presents... a regular R&B showcase in London and New York that is designed to shine a spotlight on other artists.

Radha Medar says the event "shows how much Mahalia really cares about the community she comes from and cementing fresh opportunities for a genre which isn't always supported in the industry".

The idea for the night came out of Sister Sounds, an event run in conjunction with the charity Small Green Shoots and Dr Martens.

"I'd like to do something like that again," Mahalia says. "Maybe now is the time. Natalie [Wade, founder and former CEO of Small Green Shoots] is still very much part of my circle."

Ed Sheeran and Amy Wadge also remain in the circle. Mahalia landed in New York the day after the copyright lawsuit brought against Sheeran and Wadge by the estate of Marvin Gaye had found in Sheeran's favour.

"I saw them both that day," she says. "And, as a songwriter, I cannot imagine the stress of the whole thing because it pulls into question everything we do. I'm very happy for them."

Indeed, Mahalia says that protecting and paying songwriters is "the biggest issue right now in the industry". Her partner Benjamin Hart is a songwriter and worked with her on a lot of IRL.

"Going through that process together and seeing how badly songwriters are treated was very difficult for us," she says. "The issue with songwriter compensation starts with major labels. They need to change the business model otherwise we just can't move forward. Songwriters just aren't getting paid... And all of those people who work at labels and in publishing, they would not be in those jobs if they were not being paid. So it deeply bothers me that songwriters could do years of sessions on songs that may never come out. We've got songwriters all over the world who have got part-time jobs. We've got songwriters in LA who are Uber drivers. And that's not making sense because their songs are being played on the radio, their songs are getting to No.1."

As the campaign around IRL gears up, Mahalia's time in America chimes well with Atlantic's desire to run what Howard describes as "a truly global campaign."

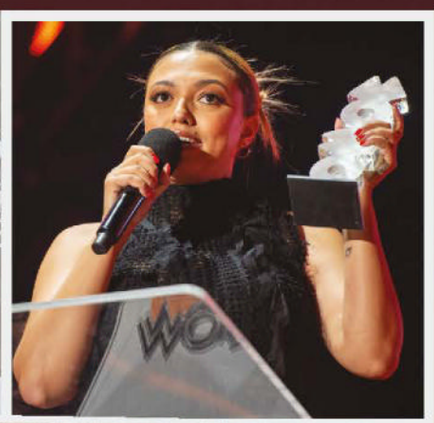
"We're looking for genuine global growth,' he says. "If we can deliver an album with a good tone around it, a well-reviewed album, an album that her fans love, then that's a big job done. After that, we're looking for genuine consumption and genuine growth, not just in the UK, but worldwide."

For Mahalia, New York also presents an opportunity to test herself against a new city.

"It makes sense practically because a lot of my team are here," she says. "But I want to recapture the feeling of when I first moved to London. I want to throw myself into something a bit more intimidating."

And, as we leave her to get back to the album promo treadmill, Mahalia makes clear one last time that she means business, now more than ever.

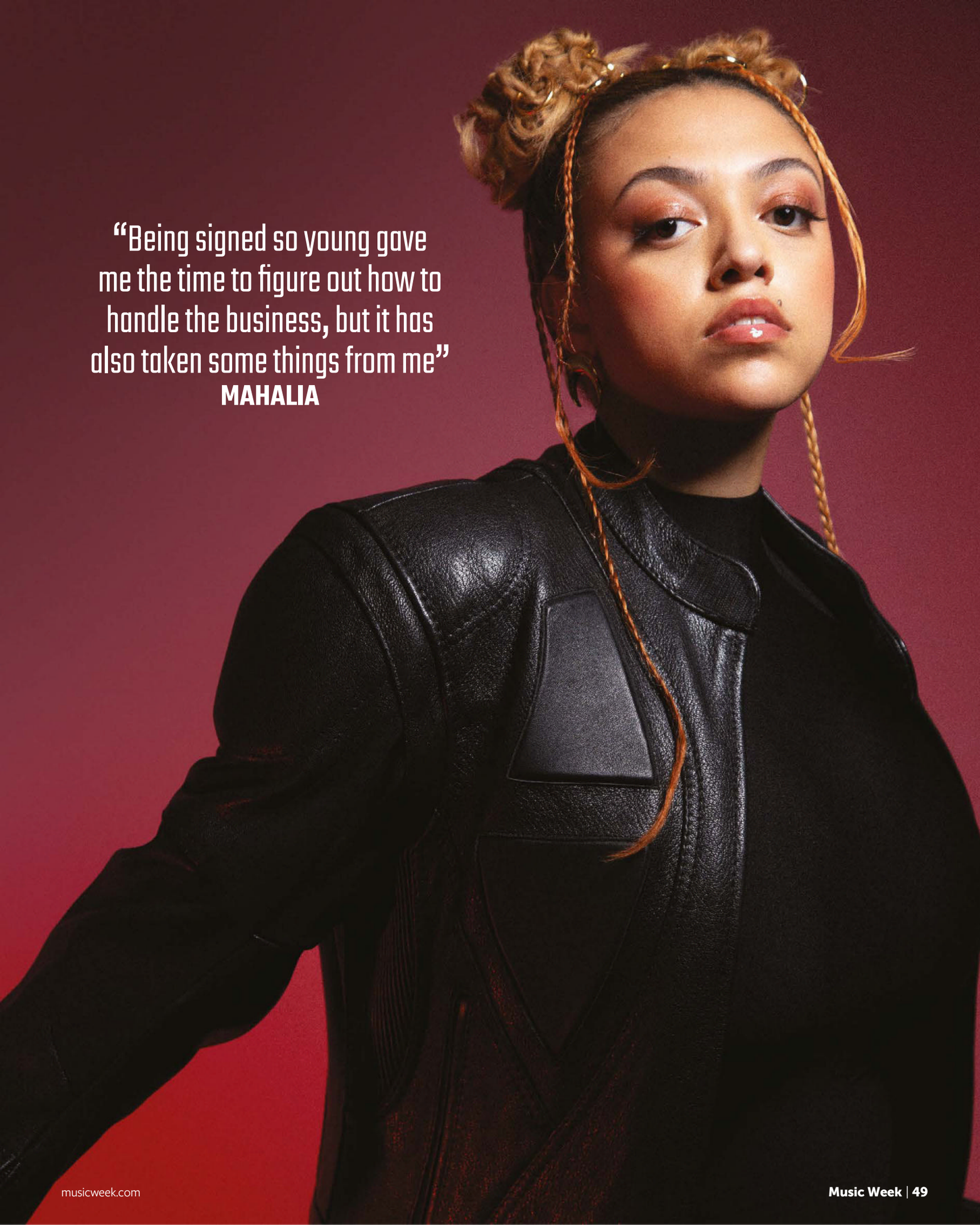
"I'm certainly bolder now," she says, sounding a bullish final note. "I'm in my no-fucks-given era. Even in the last five years, between my first album and this one, I'm a different woman."



To be or not to R&B: *(Clockwise from top left) Mahalia at the BRITs this year, winning a MOBO last year and with manager Radha Medar*

"It is incredibly impressive that Mahalia has maintained a 10-year career in this industry"
RADHA MEDAR METALLIC INC

PHOTOS: Antony Jones, Joseph Okpako, Dave J Hogan, Getty, Radha Medar



“Being signed so young gave me the time to figure out how to handle the business, but it has also taken some things from me”
MAHALIA

Brass Tacks

Few working in the music industry can stake a claim to be involved in as many different areas of it as **YolanDa Brown**. Almost a year into her role as chair of the **BPI**, the saxophonist, composer, radio presenter and music education expert is now opening **Soul Mama**, a new grassroots venue and restaurant. Here, the winner of the Music Champion category at our **Women In Music Awards** 2022 expands on her vision for the business and talks live music, diversification and hard work...

WORDS: ANNA FIELDING **PHOTOS:** MARIOLA ZOLADZ/SONY MUSIC

She must have picked it up from playing jazz, you think, as YolanDa Brown talks through her list of projects and passions. That ability to switch rapidly between modes while making everything seem like a coherent whole. It could be a jazz thing, or it could just be who she is.

Brown is the current chair of the BPI, having taken over from Ged Doherty a year ago, but the musician and executive fills her time with much more than that.

Brown is also [*deep breath*] the chair of charity Youth Music, along with sitting on various other boards and advisory committees with a special focus on music education. In June, meanwhile, she broke the record for the biggest amount raised by a restaurant on Kickstarter in order to open Soul Mama, a new small venue and restaurant space in Islington, North London, which she co-founded with her manager Adetokunbo "T" Oyelola. Brown also composes music, including for popular kids' TV formats, from all-time classic Sesame Street and her own BBC series YolanDa's Band Jam. Additionally, she works as a presenter for various radio stations, and on top of all that, she still records and tours as a saxophonist.

Yet, she exudes calm and laughs easily and often throughout her sit-down with *Music Week*, which takes place during a typically busy day.

"My primary role, and the reason I wear this many hats, in fact the reason I walk around like a hat rack, is to make connections," she begins. "I'm very passionate about music and education and I know the gaps and the areas that need support. Sometimes, the industry can offer that support and I have a hat in that ring as well, I can have conversations that cross the border. I'm also an artist, and so I understand that perspective. But as much as it is a lot of hats, it's nice to be able to stretch into those different places and maybe give a perspective that hasn't been thought of around the table. That is the thing that drives me to keep doing it and to make more of those connections."

Brown's ability to bring people together for the benefit of others, and her capacity for sheer hard work, haven't gone unrecognised. She has won several awards and honours, including the Best Jazz MOBO two consecutive years in a row in 2008 and 2009. Last year, she received the Music Champion Award at Music Week's Women In Music Awards.

"I mean, it was a huge honour just to have been selected," reflects Brown, who led the room in a sing-along of her walk-on track, Take That's Never Forget. "A couple of months before, I'd been announced as the new chair of the BPI, and although I've been in and around the industry, there were still some people I wanted to meet in that new capacity. The day itself was really great for me, because everybody was there. It almost felt like a welcome event to the wider industry."

Brown was also awarded an OBE on the 2023 New Year's Honours List for services to music, music education and broadcasting.

"It was absolutely a whirlwind couple of months," she recalls. "I mean, you don't do any of this for the awards, but when you are honoured, when

> **"The dream is for Soul Mama to nurture the industry in many different ways – like an actual mama!"**
> YOLANDA BROWN

Sax to grind: *YolanDa Brown was crowned Music Champion at the Music Week Women In Music Awards 2022*

“The belief that music education can be accessible for everyone is what gets me out of bed every day”

YOLANDA BROWN

you are cherished, it does give you a lovely feeling. It helps you engage when you have those little moments where you wonder if this is still your calling."

On the day she collected the OBE, Brown met Brian May, who was receiving a knighthood at the same time. It turns out that being at Buckingham Palace together wasn't the only thing they have in common.

"I was studying a PhD in management science before I went on to be a musician and it was in my final year that I put it on the back burner to pursue music," she says. "Brian May left his PhD to be in Queen and then went back 30 years later to get his doctorate in astrophysics. I'd always thought of that. So it was nice to tell him and connect over that story. I knew if anyone understood the feeling it would be Brian May!"

Brown's PhD remains on the back burner for now, and no wonder – she's buzzing with big plans. It's time, then, to find out what's in store for YolanDa Brown, as we discuss everything from the BPI and the prospect of a BRIT School in the North of England, to grassroots venues and what the industry can do to open doors for young people...

All that jazz: *(Clockwise from top) YolanDa Brown on stage in Hamburg last year, at the BRITs in February and with her OBE*

Let's start with the BPI. How did it feel when you got the call to become chair?

"I got a call from a headhunter and thought, 'Oh, this is something I'd really like to do.' It felt like a good time to be part of it all and the changes that are happening. I think what's really nice is when you go through an interview process and you speak your mind and it aligns [with what the employer wants]. So that was really motivating, I was absolutely chuffed and I'm enjoying it."

Do you think your appointment proves progress is being made in terms of the calls for diversification in leadership positions?

"I think it probably is the way people look at me, but I don't look at myself that way, or I would have been doing it for everything in my life since I was born... The area I lived in, the school I went to, the instrument I chose to play and the way I chose to play it. I understand the responsibility, but I don't necessarily carry it as, 'Hello, I'm a Black woman, see me here.' I'm just YolanDa and I can only be me. And, as much as I know that we are living in a time of change and people will remark on that, I also hope that I'm here for what I bring as a human being."

You're coming up to a year in the role. What would you say you've achieved so far?

"It's been a very unique year for me, I was remarking on that with the team just the other day. When I came in our CEO of 15 years [Geoff Taylor] was stepping down. So for the first six months it was about securing the future of the BPI, working out what that would look like and who would take the helm. It was good to speak openly with different people about where the BPI could go, but also very time-consuming to make sure we found the right person. I'm now very proud that we have Dr Jo Twist coming in as CEO. And, of course, there are still the conversations about AI, streaming and representation in our industry. There's still lots of work to be done. I want to see those conversations being approached in a heartfelt way, to see that people really want change. Action can follow much more easily after that, so I'm looking forward to the coming years."

Earlier this year, you announced plans to open a BRIT School in the North. How could that benefit the industry?

"Bradford is where we settled on. A lot of research went into that, with a fantastic team at the BPI looking where the school could be, where there was a need, and it's been great to see that reciprocated by the local area. We're still waiting to see what the final decision will be, but I'm really excited about the potential. But in order for something like a new BRIT School to happen there need to be so many conversations, so much blue-sky thinking and working out how much industry support will come into it. That project is an example of how talking and thinking about a plan can result in partnerships developing along the way."

Away from your work at the BPI, you've announced plans to open a venue. What was the motivation behind that?

"Soul Mama is a live music venue and restaurant in Islington Square in what was the old postal sorting office. It's lovely and we've already had some events at the venue – it's been wonderful to see people in the space. We embarked on a crowd-funding campaign, people were booking tables in advance and buying membership to get early bird tickets. It's going to be about creating a space supporting everyone from emerging acts to legendary artists; a space to have great food, great music, a community that supports all styles of music. I'm really excited. I know people will say, 'Oh, she wears so many hats...' but actually I see this as part of a full circle. It's a place where education and industry can meet, a place where charity and philanthropy can meet, too."

But why open the venue now, at such a difficult time for grassroots live music?

"I had a live music venue before, in 2010, and it is a very different landscape. But I saw the power of that space, the way people used it and the way people connected. So, yes, even though we're going through a very tough time economically, we've also been through lockdown and a pandemic. And now more than ever, you need to get people together, people do want to have experiences. And having a space where it's music and food means you can come out and have a great time and feel fulfilled. It's mental wellbeing, it's escapism. We still need other human beings, no matter what happens with AI, we need the spaces to connect."

PHOTOS: Tristar Media, Karwai Tang,WPA Pool/Pool, Getty

So can Soul Mama help boost the grassroots sector?
"It's difficult, it really is. I've put a call out to audiences, the people who enjoy these artists and the content they produce, to go and see them in person, go and support their livelihoods. By doing that you're also supporting these venues. If they didn't exist, where would these artists play? We need to make sure they're catered for as well as the biggest venues."

What kind of artists are you looking at booking?
"I have a fantastic team, it would be too stressful not to. I have artists and genres in mind, my mix of music is reggae, jazz, and soul. So this space is really conducive for that style of music, but equally, for indie, pop, rock and singer/songwriters, it would be a wonderful space for them and their storytelling to really keep an audience involved. It's really important for me to get that wide plethora of artists because I think that's the one thing we do see with venues, that idea of, 'You can only play a certain room if you play a certain type of music'. I don't want that to be the case. I've experienced doors not opening because of things like that."

It's early days, but are there plans for any more Soul Mamas?
"That is the dream, for there to be Soul Mamas in different cities around the world. I would love to provide a touring platform for artists. One production rider that you can roll out across multiple venues. The guarantee that there will always be someone to look out for you and you will have an audience to come and see you. That's the dream, to be able to give that to artists. Also, with a brand like that you could have so many spin-offs, like a record label or a charitable arm that provides education, whether that's in sound, lighting, tech or culinary skills and hospitality. Nurturing in different ways, like an actual mama!"

Speaking of charity and education, what do you want to see happen in the industry on a practical level?
"We have all these conversations, but it always ends up boiling down to money. This is a time where money can be hard to come by or is tied up in particular places. But it's also about accessibility. We're living in a country where not every child has access to music making. It's about education, offering opportunities, opening the doors of the industry to welcome young people in. We've got younger generations that are working really hard to be a part of the industry, but don't even know the jobs that they could get into. There are so many connections that need to happen until we find that big pot of gold at the end of the rainbow that will [enable us to do] everything else that needs doing. So I think it's finding those little pockets of things, collaborations and partnerships that can happen between education and industry that we can do in the meantime, and that will still inspire and motivate people."

All smiles: *(Clockwise from top) YolanDa Brown with Adetokunbo "T" Oyelola at Soul Mama, winning at the MOBO Awards, on stage at Women In Music*

Do you believe that it's possible for music education to be accessible to everybody?
"That's my lifelong mission. And deep, deep down in my inner soul, I have to say yes in order to keep going every day. It's a hard slog. I've been to corners of this country where they don't have any music at all, they don't have artists coming through, they don't have any connections at all. And you think, 'How do we even begin?' I think, also, there's a lot of lobbying to be done for the higher powers to understand the state of our creative arts at the moment. Deep down in my soul the answer has to be yes, because that's what gets me out of bed every day. But it's a lot of work."

Jazz, another of your specialist subjects, has been intertwined with recent developments in music education, with Tomorrow's Warriors helping foster a new wave of talent. What excites you most about the scene right now?
"What's really interesting about the jazz scene now is how far the genre can be pushed and moulded, how far it can branch out. I still remember, in the early days of me coming out as an artist, that it was always like, 'Why are you doing that? Why would you want to mix reggae with jazz?' And now you're seeing grime, trap, folk music and all sorts coming in. And it's not just in London, there are amazing artists in Scotland, Leeds, all over. It's really encouraging because, for me, jazz is about expression, that improvised nature, that idea of not being held to a structure. It allows our young creators to say what they want to say. So we call it jazz."

As a presenter on Jazz FM and Scala, how important would you say mainstream radio is to the genre's development?
"Podcasts and streaming services are so great that you could wonder if radio will survive, but then you see listenership figures on the rise and that is wonderful. I have my two staple shows now, on Jazz FM and on Scala, and I enjoy bringing a new take on the genres I play to those audiences. It's really lovely that listeners always communicate what music does for them. You know, messages like, 'Just had a hard day at work, but you playing that song really helped me.' I need radio, just to keep in touch with the listeners that are consuming the music."

Finally, you see the music industry from many different angles. What's the one thing you would like to say to the industry as a whole?
"Firstly, I would say thank you for all the hard work. That doesn't get said enough, especially when the hard times come. I think that we forget how hard people work in the various areas of the industry. But the main message would be to continue to find ways to collaborate and partner with one another. A fractured industry can't make as many waves as one where we find our common ground and work together."

PHOTOS: Tina Korhonen, Samir Hussein/Stringer, Getty

"We live in a country where not every child has access to music making, the industry needs to open its doors"
YOLANDA BROWN

WE A&R THE CHAMPIONS

As the winners of the **A&R** gong at this year's **Music Week Awards**, **Atlantic Records** are riding high right now. To toast their success, *Music Week* meets co-president **Ed Howard** alongside members of their triumphant A&R team to find out the secrets of breaking acts...

WORDS: JAMES HANLEY **PHOTOS:** ELLIOT WILCOX/ATLANTIC

ED HOWARD CO-PRESIDENT, ATLANTIC

Congratulations on your Music Week Awards win! From an A&R perspective, how did you navigate the change in tone and sound for the new Ed Sheeran album?

"It was led by Aaron [Dessner, producer] and Ed. It was all very much from the heart and in pretty short order in a very condensed time period, so we were just trying to support that process. There was a little bit of input around tracklist and sonics – mostly around the tracks, because they'd made a lot of music and we just offered our honest feedback in terms of what was moving us the most. But once I started speaking to Ed about the stories, it's so personal, so he led [the process]. Aaron was sending mini-instrumentals to Ed and because he's such a fine producer and musician, a lot of that finished production sound was built into those initial ideas. Once they got going, it was pretty self-contained, but it was beautiful to be part of."

What were the sessions like?

"We always offer our honest input into whatever Ed's doing. He's very open-hearted and open-minded about that. I remember going down to Dungeness where they were working and it was a beautiful thing to witness. Seeing Ed go back to more of an acoustic sound was really welcome, and a real return to the beginning. I remember some of those recording sessions from + and they were very different obviously, but it reminded me of similar touchpoints and it felt like we were going full circle in a way."

How did the personal subject matter on the new album impact the A&R process?

"It took a minute to learn the genesis for each song and it was important to not be too opinionated prior to understanding those. Retrospectively, I felt myself feeling, 'Oh, wow, now I really understand what this song is, where it came from and what Ed was going through and why it's so important.' I think the feedback one might have given from a purely musical perspective maybe wasn't relevant when you consider the narrative arc of the album, and that was a learning curve for me on this record. So we were much less involved musically than maybe historically, but the job was making sure that those stories were understood very well by everybody on the project. We encouraged everybody to open up as much as possible about the themes, or why a song was written, and to do so in interesting, visual ways. It was also for Ed to speak up. He spoke in front of lots of people prior to release and it was important for him to tell those stories. Rather than necessarily getting super into the weeds of the music itself, it was about asking, 'How do you bring it to life? How do you narrate it? How do we add to it and encourage Ed to develop the story beyond the music?' That was the role."

Can you shed light on what Ed Sheeran is like to A&R?

"It's obviously a great privilege and I feel very lucky, he makes us look very clever. More specifically, he's extremely prolific, so you have to deal with a lot of ideas and creative flow and it's important to honour and support that and not interrupt it. Unlike some people who have fewer ideas and you need to coax them out, with Ed it's more of a supporting and editing role. But he's super open-minded. He's super collaborative. He's really fun. We always have a gigantic bottle of red wine at the mastering in the studio, which is a bit of a tradition. But the process is robust, it's not fluffy. He says what he thinks and we try to do the same, but he always comes from a place of love. Obviously, we've known each other for a long time and he's very respectful of what everyone gives to him, he is a super-respectful

We are who we A&R: *Ed Howard and (inset) the Atlantic team at the Music Week Awards 2023*

guy from that perspective. He knows everybody that works for him all around the world, so he's very forthcoming with his praise and appreciation for whatever input we have, which isn't always the greatest or the most valuable, but we help at the key moments and I think he appreciates that."

Is every artist so involved in every aspect of the process?

"I think that's evolved over time to be honest, because Ed was the DIY blueprint in a way at the beginning and obviously, as you get bigger and more successful, your life changes. I'd say he's still super hands-on in some ways and less in others. So again, as with every artist, it's about supporting those areas. Obviously, he's never going to need encouragement to write songs, or help writing great songs. So we get out of the way when we need to get out of the way and support where we need to support, but that changes over time with any artist and certainly it has done with Ed."

What does the length of your relationship with Ed say about the power of Atlantic's A&R?

"That's a real privilege. To meet a person at such a young age and see them grow and to far outstrip our own successes and abilities – which was on the cards from long ago – and to still have a very healthy relationship, has got to count as the most treasured thing you can find in this industry or any other."

What's the best example of Atlantic A&R with Ed Sheeran?

"We've been involved in introducing Ed to some key collaborators, be that Fred Gibson, Pharrell, Benny Blanco and others. When he makes connections as deep as those, he ends up taking over and running them, as he should, and that's why he makes such special music. But to be a part of identifying who he might get on with, and who might be an equal musically, is one of the more valuable things we've been able to do. By the way, he has identified just as many himself, if not more, but I think he has appreciated us being part of that process. That's a great satisfaction for us too."

Now the 'mathematical era' is over, where are you going next?

"This tour is running through not just this year, but next year as well. So we're going to enjoy the wrapping up of this period as we prepare for what comes after, which no doubt will be just as well thought out and equally exciting. He obviously never stops writing, never stops creating, so I don't think he'll be away for long, let's put it that way."

You work on Ed with Cannelle Bencherqi. How does that partnership operate?

"Cannelle has treated every part of the campaign with a great deal of care and a real desire to make sure that everything felt right for Ed. That has certainly been appreciated by me, but also by Ed as well. That always contributes to that smoothness in these things, and being faithful to the creative process and supporting that is something that Cannelle believes in. We all believe in it, but she manifests that. You take the stress out of those areas and the creativity can flow in the way that it's meant to. I think that's sometimes underappreciated and she deserves a lot of praise for that."

Finally, what is the role of the A&R in helping artists' stories come to life?

"Our job, even if it's not to get super hands-on with the crafting of the music, is to translate those stories and draw them out into the wider world. The job of an A&R isn't always just to introduce people or to give mix notes. Those things can happen too, but sometimes it's really understanding where the artist is coming from and what's behind the music so that we can make sure that all of the other decisions – of which there are tens of thousands – sing from the same hymn sheet. Briony [Turner, co-president] and I have worked hard to foster the strong A&R tradition within Atlantic and to maintain a team full of passionate and driven young execs. Their energy, dedication and commitment to our artists is inspiring and we are incredibly proud to see their hard work recognised with the Music Week Award."

"The job of an A&R isn't about making introductions or giving notes on mixes, it's about understanding where the artist is coming from"

PHOTO: Will Ireland

KEVIN CHRISTIAN-BLAIR

SENIOR A&R DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC

What is the biggest misconception about major label A&Rs?
"That we're this money-hungry, greedy bunch. I think we've all moved away from that 'fat cat' mentality. Deals are structured in a way where we try to be as progressive and artist-friendly as possible, and that old school vision of an A&R is changing. We're way closer overall to matching visions when it comes to deals and there's a lot more collaboration going on than ever before – at our label anyway."

A&R teams don't tend to reveal their secrets, why not?
"The secrets always change, so I don't know if anyone has the answer. The best A&Rs are able to adapt and be visionary and passionate about things that are the future."

What's it like to be at the centre of a big push to sign the next big thing?
"Above all else, there is a level of enthusiasm that artists and management need to feel. But there are structures to it: there's the passion side and the energy, then there's the A&R connection with that team. Do you really understand the artist and where they're coming from? Do you have a vision that could help them get to that place they want to get to? Those are the main things that need to marry up when it comes to signings."

How do you make sure your label wins out?
"I think the key components to closing deals are deciphering your core competencies as a label and having that merge perfectly with that artist and management team, and making sure that happens with passion and energy. You can't get stressed by it, you've got to be excited by it."

And how do you recover when you lose out on an act?
"It wasn't meant to be, so you move forward and try to keep good relationships with everyone involved, then you find the next thing that you're inspired by. There isn't much time to be down in the dumps about it. There's so much good music around now, there's no time for feeling sorry for yourself."

Who do you most admire in A&R and why?
"My presidents, Ed Howard and Briony Turner, are very different characters, but both operate at a 10 out of 10 level on a daily basis and their energy and passion are second to none. I find it inspiring to be able to come into work and know that I'm working with the best of the best. There's nothing harder than maintaining an artist for the long haul because we all see loads of artists come and go. It's still a 1% industry where very few things genuinely connect over the long term, but Ed and Briony have been able to consistently do that over the course of many years."

How has the A&R landscape changed most in the last 12 months?
"Traditionally, you'd release a record, front-load it and make sure that you'd got all the partners engaged to then deliver it once it's out. It's the total opposite now. You market the record for four to five weeks, or two weeks, depending on the type of artist, and create momentum going into the release date. I think the whole process is before the release date now, rather than afterwards."

You've worked closely on Joel Corry. How did he become a star?
"I feel we've been able to achieve what we have in terms of accolades by always trying to put out records not quite as obvious as the last. We've always had interesting features and keeping the listener on their toes for the next single was key for growth and just feeling a little bit 'different gravy'. His drive is the other key part – no one works harder than him."

Which major label rival, or otherwise, worries you most?
"I couldn't name one because that would be an injustice to the rest. We're all going to have flashes of brilliance and that goes in cycles, but I respect them all."

"Deals are structured in a way where we try to be as progressive and artist-friendly as possible"

EMILY KENT

A&R DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC

You signed new girl band Needanamebro and Yaz, a YouTuber. What do those signings say about Atlantic's A&R direction?

"We've actually been developing Needanamebro for two-and-a-half years. They came into my office and played me a song they'd written; it was a ballad and I was blown away. It was raw talent, singing and dancing ability, chemistry and the fact they can actually write that captured my heart and mind. And also, the profile they'd started to build online. They created a TikTok page called Needanamebro as a joke and it gained 100,000 followers in three months, so we suddenly started to take that joke very seriously. They are still called Needanamebro, but won't be for too much longer. With Yaz, she had a little viral moment with her song Mr Valentine and what really excited me was that she already had a YouTube fanbase. She was known as being an influencer and had this following who were interested in hearing her talk about her life. She's been doing it ever since she was 13 or 14 and she said to me, 'I always saw it as my way to get into music.' I thought, 'You're really smart, you've built a fanbase and now it's about crossing it over and letting them in on your music.'"

How much does Atlantic lean on TikTok to find artists?

"We do lean on it, but I take a lot of pride in the fact that we develop acts. We continue to sign on gut feeling and I don't think that will ever change."

That said, once you've found an artist, how important is data?

"It's an amazing tool for us because we can see if records are working or not and what countries they are working in. It's not just about finding talent, it's about understanding fanbases. The idea of Tion Wayne's [Healing] video being shot in so many different locations, one of them being India, was because we looked into the data and saw he has such a large fanbase in India."

How was the A&R process for Anne-Marie's upcoming new record?

"She had a really cool process, something she'd never done before. She did about four writing camps with a close-knit group of people and basically made the whole body of work with that crew, so it was very intimate. They all had an amazing time and she's driven the whole process herself, which has been amazing to see."

How do you A&R an act who's already a star?

"Now more than ever, it's so important to actually listen to artists about what they're enjoying and the music they like to make, especially artists that have been signed for a long time. They've got to still love what they're doing, otherwise there's no point. Anne-Marie has really taken the reins on this one and you can tell she loves the music she's making because of it."

Are there enough women working in major label A&R?

"I think it has got a lot better. I was very fortunate, I started at Syco and we always had a pretty strong female presence at the company. Looking around the industry at the time, it felt very male-heavy, but I think companies now are open, honest and transparent about women in music. It's still not perfect, but I think there is a massive effort to try and change things. There can always be more but I'm happy that it is being acknowledged."

> "My message to young women wanting to get into A&R is: be relentless, hustle and go the extra mile"

What's your message to young women who want to get into A&R?

"Be relentless, hustle. You've got to shout that extra little bit louder to get your voice heard, but if you believe in something and you think it's going to be successful, then it will be. Go that extra mile. Make that extra phone call. Go to that extra show you don't think you want to go to. You've got to break down every single wall possible. Talk to everyone and anyone you can and just get yourself known."

Tell us the most impressive thing Atlantic's A&R team did in 2022?

"To me, we're very, very good at sustaining acts that have been signed for a very long time. And breaking new acts and giving those acts the time and attention to detail they need, as well as having the one-off dance hits. So it's a combination of everything. I think we're a really well-rounded label. Winning the Music Week Award was amazing. To celebrate as a team the hard work that we put into everything, is always the best feeling. I've actually got the award on my desk right now!"

JOE BARBE

A&R DIRECTOR, ATLANTIC

How hard is it to break into A&R?
"My experience is quite different from most in that I didn't go into higher education when I left school, I went straight into work in the building industry. But music was my passion and luckily I stumbled on this apprenticeship scheme for Music4Good, an amazing youth organisation based in Brixton in South London. There are a lot more opportunities now for people from similar backgrounds to me. We have good relationships with amazing music schools – I just did some mentoring for ELAM, an incredible arts and music school in East London. We need to find the next tier of amazing music execs so we're being even more proactive in recruiting people from all walks of life."

Now you're settled at the label, how do you reflect on your career so far?
"I've been at Atlantic, on and off, nearly 14 years and I still get so excited about coming to work. There is no more gratifying feeling than being part of an artist's development, especially from scratch, and taking them to their first hit or sold-out show."

What is the key to breaking a dance track?
"My background is raving. I built up my instincts witnessing how a record would go off in a crowd at 3 or 4am on a Friday night, and feeling that energy and excitement. That experience sharpens you up and you can gauge that in the recording studio."

How does the A&R process differ in dance compared to other genres?
"There's a lot of crossover, especially with some of the dance music in the charts. It's about an amazing topline, a great melody, a great song concept, strong voices. Some of the dance music in the charts probably leans more toward pop than it does dance."

Dance acts often don't release albums, just tracks. Does that add extra pressure?
"You're always trying to have successful records, no matter what the genre or artist. A&R is a high-pressure job, make no bones about it. But in the new landscape we're learning to put out a higher volume of releases than yesteryear and see what speaks back to us in the market. It's better to put out 10 songs in a year than three and have so much pressure on every one of those songs hitting the charts."

How does Atlantic stay ahead of specialist dance labels?
"We look up to those labels. We want our club records to have the same authenticity as the hottest club label, and that's about making sure we're bespoke with the campaigns, with the promotion. We need to think about the culture of the artists, the genres they inhabit and be more nuanced – and I think we do that."

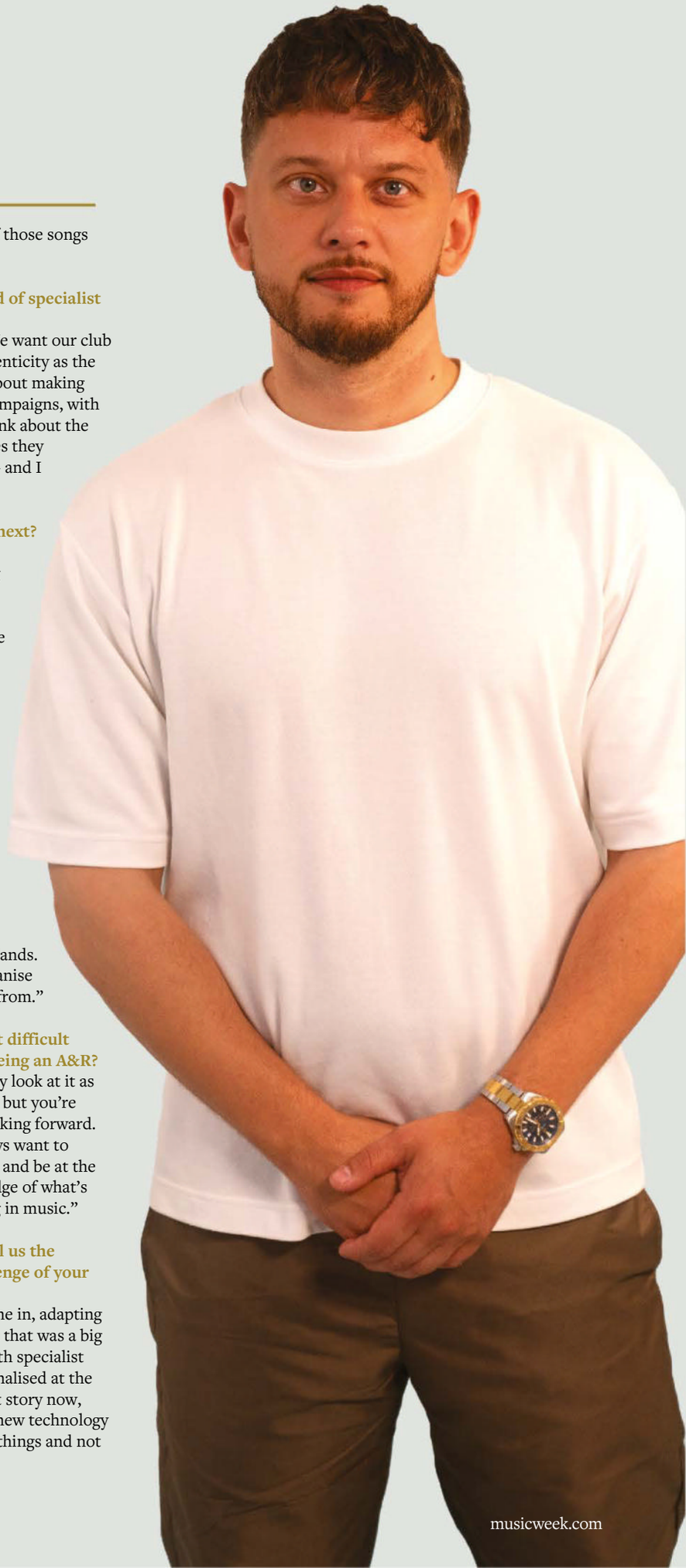
Where is dance music going next?
"Currently, I'm excited about jump-up drum and bass having a moment. That is a scene I've known going back over a decade now and the energy, the innovation in the production, everything about jump-up seems to be pushing forward."

And where are the next UK superstars coming from?
"We are looking more to the regions for untapped talent – places building communities that are maybe off the radar from London. You've seen Hannah Laing come through from Scotland and one of the artists I signed, Nathan Dawe, is from the Midlands. It's powerful when artists galvanise people in the areas they come from."

What is the most difficult thing about being an A&R?
"I don't really look at it as a difficulty, but you're always looking forward. You always want to stay fresh and be at the cutting edge of what's happening in music."

Can you tell us the biggest challenge of your career so far?
"After streaming came in, adapting and learning to have hits with that was a big learning process. Especially with specialist dance music, which was marginalised at the start. Obviously, it's a different story now, but it's still about adapting to new technology trends, trying to stay ahead of things and not playing catch up."

> "We want our club records to have the same authenticity as the hottest dance label"



CANNELLE BENCHERQI

A&R MANAGER, ATLANTIC

Ed Sheeran was one of the first acts you worked on at Atlantic. That must have been quite the welcome...

"My first Ed album was No.6 Collaborations Project. That was a great effort in terms of Ed being really open-minded with entering new circles of producers, each artist having their own crew they wanted to work with and navigating who he was going to bring into the mix. Executing that was a fun time for us and it felt like a great, natural progression for where he was at in his career."

Moving on to the new album, what did you do to help facilitate the recording?

"It was written and recorded outside London in a very secluded and safe space that I feel very proud that we managed to build. We gave Ed and Aaron [Dessner] that level of trust of being able to say, 'Just go down there and write what it is that you want to write and we'll be here, we'll support you through the process.' When + came out I was a teenager and I love that album inside out, so it was great being able to give my insights on the [new] music. Some of – [Subtract] reminded me of the earlier work, it all felt very raw."

Can you describe your approach to A&R?

"We live in a climate where data is important, and through the pandemic we've seen how some platforms can blow up a record off the back of a viral lyric or piece of content. But I grew up being a fan: a fan of bands, a fan of artists and completely belonging to a community. So I always have in the back of my head, 'Where does this artist belong? What are they going to say to their audience? Who is their audience going to be and how are they going to identify themselves? What is this artist offering? Is it hope? Is it understanding? Is it a voice for a generation?' I always try to look at those aspects. Having an understanding of social media and where the communities of fans of the artists you're going to sign live is key. Community and fandom are very important for me, as well as understanding why a record exists."

Are major labels doing enough to open doors for women to get into A&R?

"We've really made an effort at Atlantic. I've seen a massive change, there weren't so many female A&Rs when I joined six years ago. I've never not felt encouraged here. There's definitely not a culture of belittling women at this label and I wouldn't have stayed this long if that were the case. But I think labels can always do more and it's something I'm very passionate about. To come from a different company, completely start from scratch and get my dream job, I want to try and empower as many people to do that as I can – and definitely women, because it's great to be able to support and empower each other."

"Community and fandom are very important to me, as well as understanding why a record exists"

Why has A&R always been seen as such a male-dominated sector in the business?

"There are some aspects of A&R that are still slightly male-dominated. If you look at the dance space, it feels like a little bit of a boys' club. Maybe it was the nature of the job back in the day in that men are pushed to the forefront to sell a product and deliver. We're breaking that mould, but we can only do that if we see role models, and Briony being the face of our company, with Ed, is a massive turning point."

What has Briony taught you?

"She's such an outspoken woman and teaches us all to stand our ground and not be afraid to give our opinion. Ed and Briony are very thorough and detailed when it comes to building a record and breaking it down with a surgical approach. We have a really open forum here where we try a bunch of things until we hit the sweet spot. It's great to have a team that allows you to go through the stages, but then turn out the greatest product. I've seen Briony do that over the years with all the hits she's had with Clean Bandit and Jess Glynne, and most of them going to No.1, straight after working on it for weeks and getting to mix number 87. It's just great having a woman to look up to in that position."

And what have you learned from working closely with Ed Howard?

"Ed is arguably one of the most successful yet kindest people in the industry, so I've learned to approach any crisis or difficulty with great calmness, rationality and a stoic approach. I look up to Ed and everything he represents. He took me under his wing and taught me the job, so I feel very privileged to be working alongside him."

Fabric of society: *Fabric in full swing*

FORTUNE THE

UK dance music's mainstream boom has been well documented, but away from the No.1 hits and major label signings, **Fabric** has been strengthening its position at the epicentre of the scene. As it heads towards its 25th year, *Music Week* meets co-founder **Cameron Leslie** and his team to talk dance culture, expansion and find out how the London club is extending its music industry reach...

WORDS: ANNA FIELDING **PHOTOS:** FABRIC/BILLY ALLEN

To operate as a nightclub for a quarter of a century is impressive. The legendary Haçienda managed 15 years, Studio 54 just 33 months. Fabric, however, is set to celebrate its 25th birthday next year, and its longevity, not to mention its central importance to the wider music industry, is even more surprising in today's context, where Covid, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis have all increased the pressure. Last year, the Night Time Industries Association revealed that over one third of Britain's nightclubs had closed their doors for good between 2019 and 2022.

Open since October 1999 and founded by Keith Riley and Cameron Leslie, Fabric has always been unusual, if not unique. It's a 1,600-capacity London club and it's in Farringdon, in the middle of the city, not pushed to the industrial edges. It has also never felt the need to cater to the whims of anyone. As such, it is a destination in its own right, regularly filling 25,000 square feet with people who are there for the music, and topping various 'best club in the world' lists.

"We've always chosen to gear it around people," says Cameron Leslie. "Fabric is for the people who go there, who work there and who play there."

The club opened on October 29, 1999. There were queues round the block and reports that even Goldie was turned away because no one else could fit inside. Leslie smiles at the memory of the evening.

> "Acts can't buy their way into Fabric, playing here is a stamp of approval"
>
> CAMERON LESLIE
> FABRIC

FAVOURS RAVE

"It was very, very tough, none of us had done anything like it before," he says. "I mean, the night itself was absolutely on fire, but for us, I won't say it was chaos, but it was close. It was organised chaos."

These days, Fabric is still on form, facing its future with a recent refurb, an experienced team and a new record label, Fabric Originals, that will sit alongside its existing imprint Houndstooth. What's more, Fabric recently signed a deal with Peermusic that will facilitate in-house publishing for the 60-plus writers signed to Houndstooth, which turns 10 this year.

Despite the difficulties facing clubs, the last few years have seen a dance music boom in other ways. Breaking acts Eliza Rose and LF System both topped the charts in 2022 with major label singles. Established artists such as Beyoncé and Drake incorporated classic club sounds into their new work, while newer acts like Fred Again.. and Peggy Gou are pulling in large crowds all over.

"Peggy Gou closed down Soho when she appeared in Soho Square recently," says Hiroki Beck, Fabric's head of labels. "It's a kind of celebrity culture. We've seen it with US EDM artists, people like Deadmau5 or Steve Aoki, but not so much outside of that until now."

But the Fabric ethos, says Beck, isn't geared towards starry bookings. "We want to appeal to our existing demographic, not to alienate them," he says.

Over the years, Fabric has helped several artists on the path to stardom. In an interview with the club, Diplo credited his 2005 FabricLive mix as his "introduction to the world as a DJ for many people". The club's Friday nights were pivotal in pushing many grime and dubstep acts into the mainstream, with JME and the Boy Better Know crew being a particular case in point. DJ Craig Richards, meanwhile, has built a career based on being its Saturday night resident for almost two decades. And because of his regular and wildly popular sets, Chilean-German DJ Ricardo Villalobos will always be associated with Farringdon.

Hearing Beck speak about Houndstooth and Fabric Originals, it's clear that he believes Fabric's contribution to the industry is invaluable. And while the majors are busy trying to unearth the next mainstream crossover, Fabric is focusing on the underground.

"We established the new label to sign artists representing the sounds of the club, with a focus on dancefloor-geared music," says Beck. "We are in a very privileged position to have a direct link to the club, so instead of just creating yet another dance label – which is a rather tired model – we are able to match our release plans with events at the club. The aim is always to have that double aspect when it comes to considering an artist, cross-promoting both elements, be it selling more vinyl or tickets for shows."

All of which means Fabric's A&R reach is wider than many of their peers.

"We are lucky to be in a position to have direct relationships with some of the best talent within the dance and electronic sphere," he says. "The mission for Originals is quite simple really: to become the home to the biggest dance label brand with a consistently high quality output, not just for established artists but also championing the new surge of talent that will become tomorrow's stars. We take inspiration from the likes of Ninja Tune, XL and Warp – but we also want to go on our own trajectory and find our own pathway to success."

Cameron Leslie points out that Fabric's ability to "move, adapt and do things faster than a bigger, well-established set-up," works as an advantage.

Beck says that Fabric's label and publishing ventures rely on creativity and its long-established spirit of independence.

"It's not all about how much money you can throw into something and force the issue," he explains. "We have to think outside the box to get our voices heard on behalf of our artists. Also, being open to collaboration is important to get leverage and stay relevant, so it's about partnering with the right companies, whether that is distribution, DSPs, or even brands in other industries."

Over its 10-year existence, Houndstooth has developed electronic acts including Special Request, Call Super and Throwing Snow, while also branching out with more recent releases by JFDR, Hinako Omori and buzzy dance/metal band Scalping.

Beck says that the Peermusic deal will help push the operation up a level.

"Acquiring both master and publishing copyrights has enabled us to grow our publishing and sync arm significantly, and this new venture with Peer will expand our reach globally," he says. "Sync has always been a strong revenue source for Houndstooth and we want to expand that even further, so we can reinvest in the artists we believe in and help them secure additional income when the live sector has been averse to risk-taking post Covid."

Being uncomfortable with taking chances has never been a charge one might level at Fabric. Ever since Cameron Leslie and Keith Riley met in the Charterhouse Street venue, they've been prone to gamble.

"When I first spoke to Keith, I realised quite quickly that we were very different people with different skill sets," Leslie says. "But that those skills converged perfectly on a project like this."

Leslie enjoyed nightclubs in the way many who were in their 20s in the late 1990s did, but he wasn't a scene expert.

"This project was like a blank piece of paper, we could fit it with all our aspirations and desires," he says. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime thing and it fitted perfectly with a lot of what I knew about. I knew I could really add something."

That desire would prove helpful when Leslie and his team encountered challenges, of which there have been many. Some were small, such as the period Time Out would always talk about the severity of Fabric's queue. There were larger issues, such as the closure of drum & bass-focused sister club Matter, based at The O2, and the ensuing financial difficulty.

But Fabric's darkest hour was in 2016. During the summer of that year, two boys in their late teens died drug-related deaths having spent time in the club. By early September, Islington Council had revoked Fabric's licence, stating that staff had not taken adequate steps to prevent people taking illegal drugs. An announcement stated the club would close permanently. To many, the punishment seemed unduly heavy and there was much conjecture.

"You went through a range of emotions in a very short space of time," recalls Leslie. "From feeling very battered, bruised and wounded, to feeling very angry and full of fire and the need to right what you thought was a deep injustice. I believe we had run the club as well as anybody else and I still think we are an exceptional operator."

Support came from many quarters. A petition attracted around 160,000

In the club: *(L-R) Fabric team members Jorge Nieto, Cameron Leslie, Flaminia Agrimi and Hiroki Beck*

signatures, then there were the expected allies: DJs, the dance music press and the Fabric faithful. London mayor Sadiq Khan spoke out, as did the novelist Irvine Welsh. Even the right-wing think tank The Adam Smith Institute made statements in Fabric's favour.

"It wasn't just support in writing, but people dipping their hands in their pockets," says Leslie. "We were able to reopen. It's amazing that you can have three or four months of being at the bottom and then get to the real positivity and elation of getting open again."

But even when open, Fabric still needed to make up for lost time. Security needed to be reviewed and relationships with the authorities looked at. The sudden closure had also meant refunding tickets, honouring the contracts of artists who couldn't play and ramping up their bookings again.

"With artists, it's their careers, their jobs, they have to find work elsewhere, so they get picked off by other venues," says Leslie.

Printworks had recently opened and many acts simply switched their bookings to the newer London club.

But Fabric persevered and built again. The 2016 closure also had an unexpected benefit several years later. When the coronavirus lockdowns closed every venue, the team at Fabric knew what they were in for.

"Well, it obviously wasn't hugely welcomed off the back of 2016, but the bulk of the team had been there back then too," says Leslie. "We were able to switch things off very quickly. That was crucial when it came to not losing money."

They knew, he says, that the venue that opened would not be the same one that closed, both in spirit and physically. When they got "the amber light" to reopen they took the chance to refurbish.

"After all, you can't just shut down dancefloors for extended periods of time," says Leslie. "Now, we're in a really positive place."

Indeed, the impression you get from the co-founder and his team is one of a group of people who relish the challenge of maintaining their position at the forefront of dance culture.

"We represent the cutting edge sounds of tomorrow, but there's an element of responsibility that comes with that," says Beck. "It's about being leaders in our scene when it comes to certain agendas, such as being a lot more vocal on diversity, or championing LGBTQ rights. We have to educate the mainstream as interest builds in our scene, reminding everyone that dance music is open to all."

Ventures such as Fabric's labels will only help the cause.

"The new Originals label has given a complementary way to service artists and a missing puzzle to support what Fabric is as a brand beyond its walls," says Jorge Nieto, creative director. "We are expanding, curating events in other venues and spaces, especially London institutions such as the English National Opera, St Paul's Cathedral, the Royal Albert Hall, Museum Of London and others."

The events in these other venues promise to be fun, but they are emblematic of something bigger.

"It means we're working with the City Of London and we haven't ever really talked to them before," says Leslie. "We announced a show in St Paul's Cathedral and the prospect of that, pre-Covid, or in 2016, was unimaginable. There's a huge amount of collaboration that didn't exist five years ago."

Part of this, he thinks, is a post-Covid reckoning about what constitutes a thriving city. But, at the same time, nightclubs are also growing closer to the establishment.

Leslie points out that the illegal party boom during Covid demonstrated the relative safety of regulated dancefloors inside clubs. Then there's the fact that politicians and other decision makers are now, largely, drawn from post-rave generations with a better understanding of the culture.

"We've always had a good relationship with our local authority, it's probably even better now than it was before" says Leslie. "We have a good relationship with our local police and the mayor's office is far more active now. Pre-2016, there was no Night Czar, there wasn't that team looking at London as a 24-hour proposition."

"We became a symbol of resilience and advocacy for the entire industry," chimes in marketing director Flaminia Agrimi. "We are emphasising the need to protect and support music venues and their role in nurturing creativity and community, highlighting the importance of preserving cultural spaces and the power of collective action."

Speaking of which, Fabric is part of the Night Time Industries Association and Leslie describes chair Sacha Lord as a friend. There is, however, a sense that it's best to pick their battles.

"It doesn't necessarily mean we're going to be the poster club for every single campaign, because you really dilute your potency," says Leslie. "But then, when there is something you feel very strongly about, you're able to lend a hand."

The shape of the world Fabric inhabits has also changed thanks to Covid, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis. For Agrimi, as the marketing lead, that means making sure they can "spark curiosity" among would-be clubbers. They do so by "providing intriguing snippets, teasing content, or asking thought-provoking questions. This can encourage people to delve deeper and spend time with our message."

Leslie has noticed some changes in the relationships the club has with agents and management, too.

"Perhaps it's the landscape we're in now, but you don't just want to be seen as a stepping stone in the trajectory of an artist," he says. "Sometimes you have to play the game, to be able to participate in somebody's career and you know that, very soon, they're going to forget you. Whereas back in the day, you still felt the support and loyalty from artists that have way outgrown you."

Much of the industry, he says, came out of Covid "very bruised" and needing to recoup lost earnings.

"We have an understanding that they need to pull things back, but at the same time we need to make sure that any price increases aren't out of step with the public," he says. "The cost-of-living crisis is biting."

Leslie says the industry, especially the ecosystem around booking and managing artists, needs to be wary of expecting double-digit percentage increases in fees.

"It's because they don't get passed on," he says. "We don't want to create ticket prices like that. We all need a sensible approach to the real world and delivering what we do to the public."

There are advantages for artists when it comes to playing Fabric.

"The way the nights are set up, across three rooms, means we can platform new artists alongside well-established ones," says Leslie. "I think people know they can't buy their way into this club. Hopefully there's always been an understanding that playing here is a stamp of approval. We're loyal and we believe in repeat bookings."

In 2023, Fabric's relevance has increased and its impact can be felt way beyond the dancefloor. But for Cameron Leslie, ultimately, Fabric will always mean looking at a crowded dancefloor.

"It's happy people in a happy place," concludes Leslie. "It always comes down to the simple thing of seeing people enjoying themselves."

Floor thrillers: *Houndstooth act Scalping (top) and an aerial view of an empty Fabric (bottom)*

"We represent the sounds of tomorrow, but there's a responsibility that comes with that"

HIROKI BECK
FABRIC

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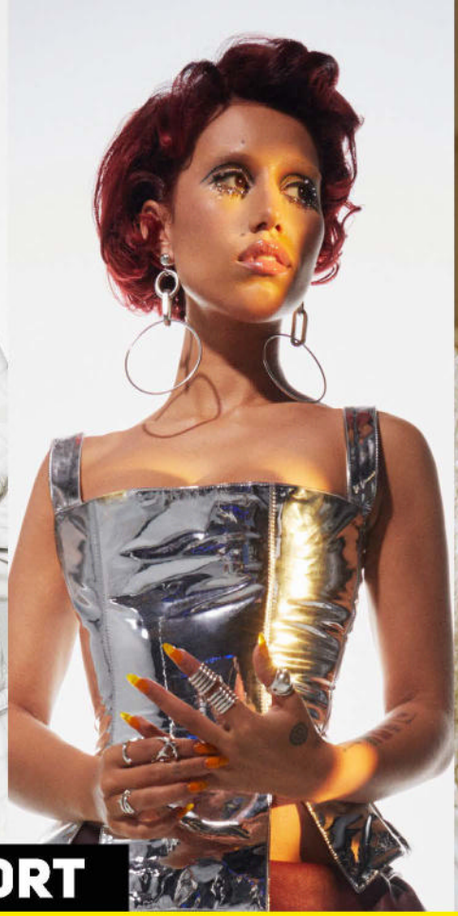


Service please: *(L-R) Believe & Hoxton Vinyl act Knucks, The Orchard's Raye, Hoxton Vinyl client Stormzy and FUGA's Björk*

SPECIAL REPORT

SERVING A PURPOSE

The world of **label services** is thriving, with a wide range of forward-thinking companies offering an ever-increasing array of options to labels and artists seeking an alternative. Here, in a **special report**, *Music Week* quizzes representatives from some of the biggest players to discuss the latest trends and talk data, AI and the future...

— BY BEN HOMEWOOD —

When it comes to the ever-evolving world of label services in 2023, one thing is clear: the sector has never been more competitive.

"As new players enter the market, it can get difficult for artists, managers, and lawyers to distinguish between the different offerings and what services are provided by each company and in each deal," says Malena Wolfer, director of artist services at Believe, the company which won the Music Week Award for Label & Artist Services back in May. "Our approach is to be very upfront about what services are or aren't included in our deals, we are very proactive about educating clients about the long-term benefits of label services deals and we focus on delivering real value."

Ian Dutt, MD at The Orchard, who were among the competitors on the shortlist, also points to how crowded the playing field is these days.

"The competition has intensified on three fronts," he explains. "The first is the number of new companies that have entered the market, the second is the offering that label service companies are now expected to provide and the third is how traditional labels who, in the past, would only offer copyright deals, now offer similar deals to services companies."

Dutt says that The Orchard, who in 2022 enjoyed success with Raye, Russ Millions and Bad Bunny in partnership with Rimas Entertainment, has to be ready to pivot when necessary.

"We have had to adapt our offering as the clients' needs diversify," he says. "We are expected to offer root and branch solutions from the smallest artist releasing their first track, to the largest labels in full campaign mode. That diversification has to cover all aspects of record company and distribution functionality, and our focus, investment and core understanding of technology allows us to be fluid and constantly add new services."

At Believe, boss Alex Kennedy says ambitions are "sky-high" in the wake of their Music Week Awards win.

"We have industry-leading expertise, experience and drive in our team to sign bigger artists, deliver chart-topping campaigns and develop more acts from scratch," he says. "That will allow us to reach our aim of being the independent alternative to the majors."

Like many of its peers, Believe operates with a digital-first approach, and Wolfer suggests that is the main driver behind its recent success.

"We have seen very strong growth year-on-year across our services business," she says. "We partner with artists, managers and labels who understand the digital world and want to grow their audience and business with us. This strategy has helped us to build a very healthy roster of artists and labels who have the ability to engage audiences across DSPs and social media and make a cultural impact."

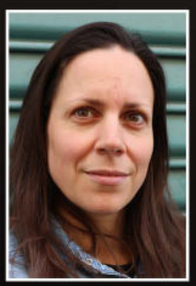
One of the jewels in the Believe crown is Knucks, the independent North West London rapper who charted at No.3 with album Alpha Place last May.

Wolfer says his breakthrough is a demonstration of what a great label services team can deliver, adding that it highlights the fact that Believe allows artists to grow and develop at their own pace.

"When Knucks signed a full services deal, it was clear that we wanted to deliver a Top 5 record and the team worked tirelessly throughout the entire campaign," she says. "It shows the importance of good services execs that can really plug into an artist's vision and become part of the team. The boost we were able to

"We partner up with people who understand the digital world and want to grow with us"
MALENA WOLFER
BELIEVE

"We helped Stormzy secure a No.1 album in a tight chart battle"
MARLEY DENNIS
HOXTON VINYL



"With us, the label remains in control of their strategy, we are an extension of their team"
DOROTHEE IMHOFF
FUGA

deliver with DSPs, marketing, promotion, sync and physical distribution, combined with Knucks and his team's creativity and entrepreneurial prowess, was the perfect pairing."

Believe partnered on the physical release of Alpha Place with Hoxton Vinyl, who came on board after the digital-only initial release when fans clamoured for a physical version.

"The biggest misconception about us is that we are just a vinyl manufacturer," says Hoxton Vinyl boss Marley Dennis. "We've helped several artists and labels build significant physical businesses that continue to generate significant income for them. We provide manufacturing, warehousing, physical distribution and logistics. For younger labels we often build this from scratch, starting with e-commerce stores and manufacturing."

Dennis notes that, while vinyl is expensive to make, it can contribute to significant revenue for artists, labels and distributors. He advises labels to consider the fanbase of the artist and whether vinyl is the most appropriate format.

"I also encourage all labels to run online pre-orders and let the fans dictate how many records to press," he adds. "We build and manage many online stores for artists and labels, where we allow them to adjust their orders based on demand."

Unsurprisingly, Dennis is proud of the Knucks campaign.

"Believe had already done an outstanding job and our involvement came later," he says. "Our role was to capitalise on the moment and ensure that the vinyl lived up to the quality of the music and production. Alpha Place won a MOBO and the response was phenomenal, with the vinyl release selling out almost instantly. To enhance the value of the package, we incorporated special materials and finishes such as hot foil stamping and sequential numbering on the Spotify exclusive edition, turning it into a true collector's item."

Showing the versatility of its offering, Hoxton Vinyl's recent highlights include Bear's Den's album Blue Hours ("It debuted at No.6 in the UK, thanks to our flexible manufacturing of 14 different variants," says Dennis) and Stormzy's chart-topping This Is What I Mean album.

"We played a crucial role by providing vinyl manufacturing services that proved instrumental in helping Stormzy secure the No.1 in a tight chart battle against Sir Cliff Richard," says Dennis. "Our ability to deliver a super-fast turnaround, adapt to pre-orders and be flexible around delivery to get ahead of the Royal Mail strikes that threatened to disrupt D2C orders gave Stormzy's campaign a competitive edge."

Of course, UK rap is far from the only genre that is flourishing within label services. Indeed, all of the companies *Music Week* speaks to hammer home a diverse array of success stories across the sector.

At FUGA, which was acquired by Downtown's AVL Digital Group in January 2020, global head of marketing services Craig May points to Björk, Nova Twins and Viagra Boys to show the range of the company's campaigns.

"The diversity in these artists reflects the diversity we have built in our client base through our focus on international expansion in recent years," he says. "With staff now based in 20 markets and 70% of our clients coming from outside the traditional UK repertoire sources, we are able to fully deliver on our 'Global Presence, Local Profile' mantra. It also reflects on the skill sets we have brought into the team, with both the Nova Twins and Viagra Boys campaigns benefiting from genre specialists and our audience strategy team, who work across genre and geography to identify and connect to fans."

If all that success makes it sounds like label services are the way forward, it also prompts an age old question: which is better, a services agreement or a more traditional deal?

"There may be a bit of misconception about how broad the services that we can offer to labels are," says FUGA CCO Dorothee Imhoff. "People occasionally have the misconception that they will have to cede all control of their strategy over to us, something that is perhaps tied to the old label system. However, the label remains in control of their strategy; we are an extension of their team but we do not replace them. We build and enhance the existing set-up that the label has, play to their strengths and modify our support around their needs."

At The Orchard, Ian Dutt has some myth-busting of his own to do.

"The biggest misconception is that the same level of success as that of a major label deal cannot be achieved via label services, and that scale can be seen as a weakness," he offers. "Consumers are now driving change in the industry and success can come from anywhere, any label and any territory. Label services companies are the best equipped at identifying and empowering that success from early on."

Service industry: *Hoxton Vinyl client Bear's Den (top) and FUGA act Nova Twins (bottom)*

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Believe's Malena Wolfer says that there's an important difference between what services companies can offer and what majors can.

"The services we provide across project management, marketing, sync, DSP pitching and promotions as well as digital and physical retail are the same as provided by the majors," Wolfer says. "But we often need to work with managers to demonstrate that, because our deals are so much more equitable, they can build out any of the few areas we don't provide in-house and will still make more money as their royalty share is so much higher."

On the subject of royalties, accountancy firm CC Young, also a previous Music Week Award winner, established its own dedicated division, Y Royalties, this year.

Ben Marlow, director at Y Royalties, outlines the importance of the mechanics behind label services deals.

"These deals are not as simple as higher rates, shorter terms, and copyright ownership," he warns. "Funding is important for a label services deal. Traditionally, copyright ownership follows those who fund it, so how does the artist fund the recording, production, marketing? Do they have the resources or can they secure the borrowing? Ownership also brings responsibility, and CC Young can help with services such as producer and third party royalty accounting, mechanical reporting, royalty tracking and licence clearance."

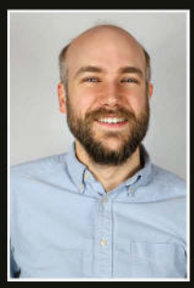
Marlow believes the royalty data is perhaps even more pertinent to label services than it is elsewhere in the business.

"It is particularly relevant given how close the artist is to their rights and how they are exploited," he points out. "Artists are often more hands-on in these deals, so having the ability to properly analyse data and understand the impact of decisions is very important. Things move quickly, so relying on traditional assumptions and industry norms can only take you so far."

With that in mind, it makes sense that label services companies use bespoke tools to analyse data. The Orchard uses OrchardGo and Insights to track data throughout campaigns. The company's senior director, label management Jasmine Bodkin, highlights their successful Russ Millions campaign for the Reggae x Calypso single with Buni and YV.

"Based on closely tracked data, our digital marketing and retail teams identified opportunities that supported Russ and amplified the release in the right areas," Bodkin says. "The remix, which featured French rapper Gazo, gave the song a second life. Via our international network, we connected the dots in the market and the track is now certified Gold in France."

FUGA has developed its own analysis platform Trends, which Craig May says provides comprehensive information on global consumption for its acts, collating social media and D2C figures to provide analysis in "very granular" detail.

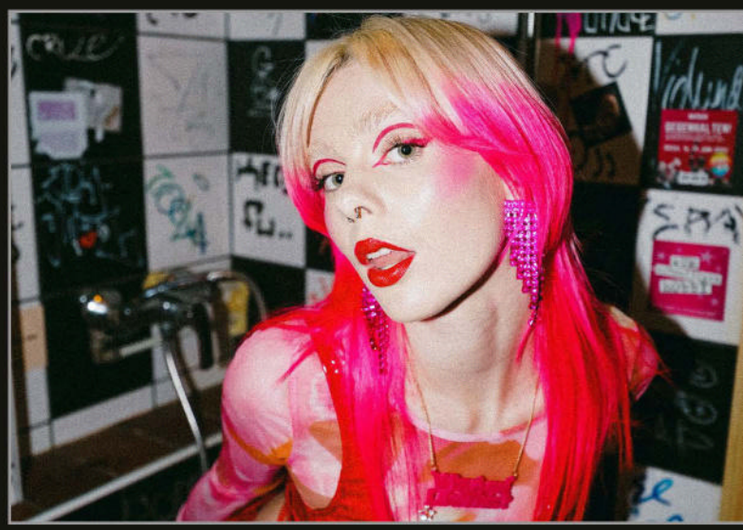


"Artists are more hands-on in label services deals, so proper analysis of data is important"

BEN MARLOW CC YOUNG

"Our international network helped Russ Millions turn Gold in France"

JASMINE BODKIN THE ORCHARD



Malena Wolfer, meanwhile, notes that Believe's platform, Believe Smart Discovery, leverages tools like Spotify Discovery Mode to increase opportunity for its clients.

But given we are in the age of TikTok, streaming and now AI, why are label services still essential? And how can the industry actually get the best out of it?

"Music in the digital age brings the artist closer and demystifies the system somewhat; they are engaged and interested in the processes and technology of delivering music and its value," says CC Young's Ben Marlow. "Artists are creative not only in the song and tracks they produce but also in where they want their careers to go and how they interact with fans. Having more options in how to structure a deal [and] exploiting your copyright gives you flexibility to try different things; the shorter term licenses offered by label services deals allows an artist to reassess and re-organise their plans every few years if they wish and not stick with one decision long-term."

Though CC Young's Marlow emphasises the need to be wary about the impact of AI on creativity, Manan Vohra, CTO at FUGA parent company Downtown Music, prefers to look on the bright side.

"While the industry is actively navigating the copyright issues surrounding generative AI, there are significant upsides," she says. "AI algorithms can analyse vast amounts of data, streaming patterns and user preferences to identify specific target audiences. This enables precise and personalised campaigns and higher ROI."

At Hoxton Vinyl, Marley Dennis also sees the positives when it comes to machine learning.

"AI can help record labels optimise their inventory by predicting which physical formats will sell faster and which will be slower," he suggests. "This can help record labels avoid a loss of sales from out of stock products and reduce the risk of overstocking. All of which can help labels plan their manufacturing schedule more effectively."

Pointing to the dawn of a new age, Believe's Alex Kennedy says AI is set to transform every aspect of what label services companies do.

"AI and generative AI will make our lives simpler, better and more efficient, from deal-making, to AI-assisted creation of promo assets, to royalty management, to coding," says Kennedy. "But with these great powers comes a new sense of responsibility and the industry needs to control the responsible deployment of AI."

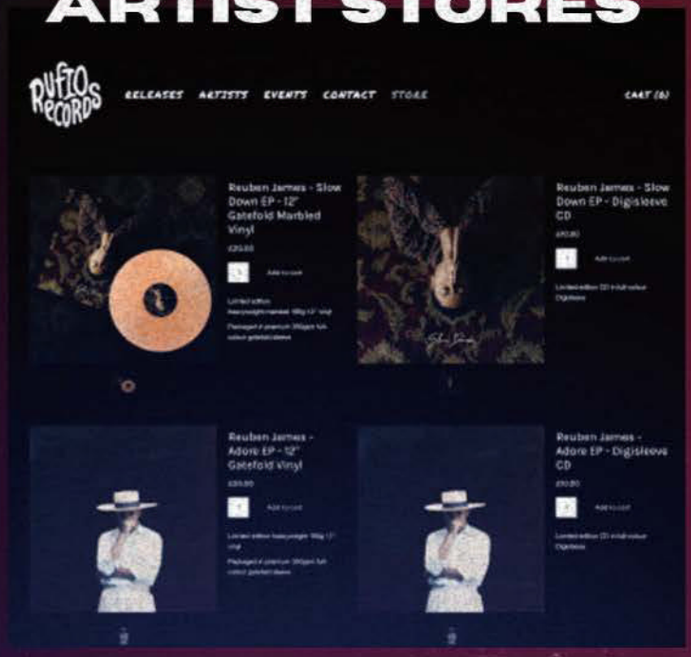
Even though he sounds a note of caution, Kennedy's optimism about the future of the flourishing label services sector is palpable.

"The industry pivot towards label services is clearly gathering steam," he concludes. "For the first time, there is now a serious choice for artists in terms of a variety of deal types and an embarrassment of riches in terms of excellent companies offering these services. Rather than a one-size-fits all scenario, it really is a seller's market and we are well-placed to thrive in this new world."

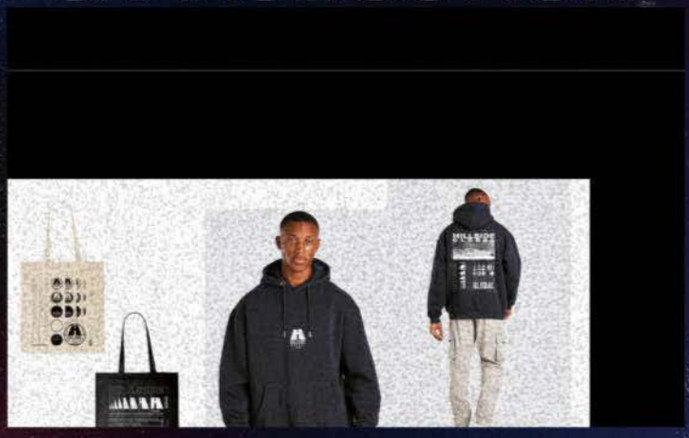
At your service: *The Orchard enjoyed success with Buni, Russ Millions & YV (main photo) and Believe client Girli (above)*

ESSENTIAL MERCH

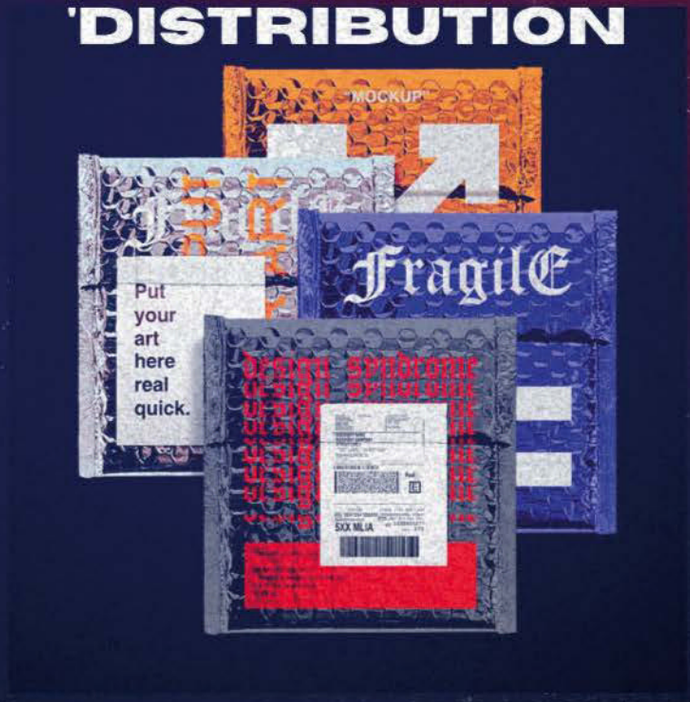
ARTIST STORES



MERCH DESIGN & PRODUCTION



PHYSICAL DISTRIBUTION



TOUR & RETAIL

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hoxton vinyl

HITMAKERS

The world's greatest songs. By the people who made them.

LITTLE MIX
SHOUT OUT TO MY EX

When it was released in 2016, **Shout Out To My Ex** sent **Little Mix** to the top of the charts. Here the 'fifth member' of the group – plus the winner of the Outstanding Song Collection honour at the **Ivor Awards 2023** – **Kamille,** tells us all about how the ultimate break-up anthem came to life...

INTERVIEW: MIRANDA BARDSLEY

Little Mix stand for women. It's as simple as that. They have so much to say, and everything they have always tried to do is about empowerment.

And that's exactly what Shout Out To My Ex was. Going into the song, we'd all been through break-ups or relationship issues, and I felt angry for them, myself and other women, because we are sometimes so hard done by in relationships. I kind of wanted to get revenge for them!

At that point, we'd recently done Black Magic, which went to No.1 [2015], and the girls were trying to figure out what they wanted to do musically. So while they were on tour, I was on a writing camp in LA getting some ideas ready for them.

Before I started writing, I sent the girls a bunch of voice notes with intimate questions only a therapist would ask, to see where their heads were at the time. Their replies really helped form my ideas and the lyrics came really quickly, and that's when I essentially just started writing a diss track to an ex.

Obviously at the time, the Perrie and Zayn [break-up] storyline was the one the world knew the most, and I remember feeling a bit nervous because the song felt so direct, but for us it wasn't about anyone in particular. The song was more about how we were going to help that girl crying in her bedroom after her first break-up, so we just thought, 'Let's do this, it needs to come out.'

Shout Out To My Ex was also a really different process to songs we'd done together before. I originally met Little Mix when I'd been working on The X Factor as a vocal coach and their A&R Anya Jones introduced us. I was so nervous but we all got on like a house on fire and it's been a friendship ever since. By the time we were writing Shout Out To My Ex, we'd built up a lot of trust and the girls were able to open up on such a deep level, which I think is what made the song such a success.

When I started working on the track in the studio, it was at the end of a long day and a lot of the other writers in the room had gone for a swim. I was chiselling out ideas on the piano on my own for a while, wrote the verse and pre-chorus in about half an hour, and when the others came back we added drum patterns and everything else. We finished it in about two days.

When you're writing, if you start overthinking you can sometimes take away that immediate magic which comes with an initial idea. With Shout Out To My Ex, it didn't go through a lot of changes, everyone just loved it and felt like it was really strong. It was one of the easiest songs I've ever written in my life, because I had so much information and feedback from the girls through the voice notes that it felt like they were in the room.

When writing for Little Mix, I've also always been driven by performance with them, because they're incredible performers. Thinking about them on stage or in their music videos always helped with forming my ideas, and with Shout Out To My Ex, I just really imagined one of them standing there singing that first line, '*This is a shout out to my ex*'. I love songs that start like that, that tell you exactly what they are and that get everyone's attention. I really wanted to make a moment that stood out.

Their first performance of it was on The X Factor and it was incredible. The feeling of seeing your songs performed live never gets old. For songwriters, so much happens behind the scenes after songs are given to an artist that we're not part of, like the artist planning stuff with their label, so that when it comes to the performance of it, it's just like you're a member of the audience watching. It's amazing!

It was also like that hearing them sing it for the first time. When I'm writing for groups, I do sometimes think about who is singing which part, but there's often no point dictating it because singers want to decide that for themselves when they get into the studio, and that happened with this one. When the girls got back from tour, they were recording a bunch of songs, Shout Out To My Ex was one of the ones they chose, and it went from there.

The way Little Mix and I have worked together throughout their career has always been very fluid, because the group have always had such amazing ideas to share and they're definitely writers who want to be involved with the creative process.

Over the years it also got more relaxed, it wouldn't be the typical, 'Oh my god, we need to come up with a hit today,' it was always just like five friends in the studio vibing. We'd get food, we'd laugh and we'd drink champagne – the girls love champagne.

When I look back at the song now, I just smile. I associate that track with sheer happiness and strength, and I have a lot of pride when I hear it because it was written from such a lot of pain, it got me and many others through a tough time.

Knowing and being part of Little Mix's journey has inspired me to feel strong, and this song transformed my life.

"I have a lot of pride when I hear Shout Out To My Ex, because it came from such a lot of pain"
KAMILLE

In the mix: *Kamille and [inset] Little Mix in the Shout Out To My Ex video*

Writer's Notes

PUBLISHERS: Sony Music Publishing, Kobalt, Eternal Dance Media, Downtown, San Remo Music Ltd
WRITERS: Camille Purcell, Jade Thirlwall, Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Leigh-Anne Pinnock, Edvard Førre Erfjord, Henrik Michelsen, Iain James
RELEASE DATE: 28.10.16
LABEL: Syco
Total Sales (OCC): 2,255,312

Publisher's Corner

Leading executives salute their star songwriters...

Lisa Cullington, VP, creative (publishing), BMG: "Kamille's hit rate is outstanding and for the past 12 years she has set the charts alight. She writes so quickly, has a barrage of melodies and, mixed with her infectious empathetic personality, she has the 'Black Magic' to songwriting, not least because that's one of the myriad of hits she's written for Little Mix. She comes up with such clever concepts and can turn her hand to any genre because her songwriting is second to none. She also has an amazing ability to write the best empowerment anthems. Shout Out To My Ex will be sung for years to come."

CENTRE STAGE

Music Venue Trust CEO Mark Davyd's monthly deep dive into live music's biggest issues...

THIS MONTH:

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

"Our venues, recording studios and rehearsal rooms deserve the same governmental support as theatres, galleries and museums"

MARK DAVYD MUSIC VENUE TRUST

Sir Nicholas Hytner is the founder and director of the Bridge Theatre, London. In a recent article in The Guardian, Hytner laid out his vision for the future of funding of the arts in the UK, which I'll summarise for you as, 'High arts should continue to receive all the funding they currently get, so let's set up a new body to give away some other public funding to any of the other stuff that's happening, because it probably matters to someone.'

In his piece, Hytner failed to mention grassroots music venues.

Sir Peter Bazalgette is co-chair of the Creative Industries Council, pro-chancellor and chair of council at the Royal College Of Art and a non-executive board member at the Department Of Education.

In 2017, Bazalgette wrote the Independent Review Of The Creative Industries, which had 18 recommendations for what government should do to support these sectors. None of his points related to the need for government action on the grassroots music venue sector either, despite him noting that, "The music industry relies on grassroots venues and production facilities as testing grounds for new artists and technicians." He also acknowledged that grassroots venues are the "lifeblood of music tourism, a sector that generates £4 billion GVA per year."

Bazalgette also mentioned that these spaces are "disappearing due to, amongst other factors, a lack of investment and rising business rates." Fifty-eight grassroots music venues are in our crisis service currently and Bazalgette is now writing a strategy for the government on how to support the creative industries.

In May 2020, Lord Neil Mendoza was appointed by the Secretary Of State as commissioner for cultural recovery and renewal. This position provides "an expert and independent voice to government" and advice "on how the culture sector can best recover from the Covid-19 pandemic." But so far this year, 48 grassroots music venues have closed.

One reason for this is that, whilst grassroots venues in the UK attracted 22 million audience visits to gigs last year, employing 30,000 people and creating over 175,000 events and over half a million performance opportunities, those same venues pay the highest rate of VAT on tickets of any major music nation. They pay almost quadruple that of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and many times more than Norway, where grassroots ticketing is zero-rated. These venues also pay the highest rate of premises taxes in Europe.

Between them, Hytner, Bazalgette and Mendoza have managed to author articles and reports which have had a positive impact on the wider cultural sector. But to date, in their reports, none of them have included the negative impact on our talent pipeline that these pre-profit taxes on cultural investment have at a grassroots level. Why? Because these challenges are not faced by our opera houses, theatres, galleries, museums or any other major cultural spaces.

Indeed, through tax codes, local authority guidance and organisational structure advantages, huge swathes of our cultural landscape are enjoying benefits on VAT and business rates (look at VAT Notice 701/47 to understand what that looks like in real life).

For example, a qualifying orchestral production company putting on a qualifying concert can claim Orchestra Tax Relief – an 80% deduction of total core costs against any tax owing on profit or a payable tax credit at a rate of 25% on a loss. You can get the same benefits for a qualifying theatre production under the Theatre Tax Relief.

It's worth you looking up those tax reliefs, because the wording of them is explicitly designed to exclude popular music events; Damon Albarn would qualify to get a tax relief for writing and producing his opera Dr Dee at the Palace Theatre, but not for writing and producing the Blur performances at Wembley.

However, it isn't Hytner, Bazalgette and Mendoza's successful arguments for the sectors they care about that we should be too disparaging about. We should instead be trying to understand why those sectors have managed to attract these beneficial conditions, and be demanding that the grassroots sector's input into the cultural life of the nation is treated equally alongside the support provided elsewhere. At the very least, our cultural infrastructure, venues, recording studios and rehearsal rooms deserve access to the same level of government support enjoyed by theatres, galleries, arts centres and museums.

Now, you will appreciate that I, on behalf of Music Venue Trust, am already asking for that. But I haven't ever met Hytner, Bazalgette or Mendoza, which raises the question of, who, in our industry, is having the meetings we need with these influential figures? And why aren't they asking for the support we deserve?

STATE OF THE (INDIE) NATION:

A monthly update on the ongoing closure crisis facing the UK's Grassroots Music Venues, which MVT tackles through its Emergency Response Service of experts; legal, licensing, planning, development, financial, property and noise gurus...

New Emergency response service cases in 2023: 58
Ongoing cases: 24
Grassroots Music Venue closures in 2023: 48
Grassroots Music Venue openings in 2023: 1

Music Week
MONTHLY CHARTS

Rap race: Central Cee & Dave top the monthly singles chart with Sprinter

PHOTO: Andrew Timms

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76/78 – Singles/Albums
77/79 – Analysis
80/81 – Market Shares
82 – Streaming/Compilations
83 – Vinyl
84/85 – Genre Top 20s
86/87 – UK Airplay/EU Airplay
88 – Spotify
89 – Vevo

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Official Singles Chart

SINGLES CHART TOP 75

JUNE CHART WEEKS 22-26

BRIT CERTIFIED PLATINUM, GOLD & SILVER AWARDS

★ Platinum (600,000)
● Gold (400,000)
● Silver (200,000)

Sales Increase · Highest Climber
+50% Sales Increase · Highest New Entry

TM	LM	MTH	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL CATALOGUE NUMBER (DISTRIBUTOR) (PRODUCER) PUBLISHER (WRITER)
1	New		**Dave & Central Cee** Sprinter Live Yours/Neighbourhood GBUM72305159 (UDS) ● (Caleb/Leslie/Dave/J.Legxacy/Evans/TR..)WarnerChapp./Sony/Universal/CC (Omoregie/Caesar-Su/Olaloye/Caleb/Leslie...)
2	1	4	**Calvin Harris & Ellie Goulding** Miracle Columbia GBARL2300300 (UDS) ★ (C.Harris/BURNS)EMI/SonyATV/Kobalt/WarnerChappell (C.Harris/M.Burns/E.Goulding/Pablo Bowman/P.Rycroft)
3	New		**J Hus Ft Drake** Who Told You Black Butter/OVO/Republic GBARL2300716 (UDS) (P2J)Warner Chappell/BMG/Universal/Kobalt (J Hus/R.Isong/EY/A.Graham/G.Judd)
4	25	2	**Jazzy** Giving Me Chaos GBUM72206719 (UDS) ● (Belters Only/M.Ralph)CC (C.Bissett/R.Griffiths/Y.Ledesma)
5	3	6	**Miley Cyrus** Flowers RCA USSM22202811 (UDS) ★2 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Warner Chappell/Pulse/Concord (M.Pollack/M.Cyrus/G.Hein)
6	8	4	**Switch Disco & Ella Henderson** React Relentless GB1102300013 (UDS) ● (Punctual/Switch Disco)Sony/Budde/Phrased Differently/Warner Chappell (E.Henderson/M.Cottone/R.Miles)
7	2	3	**David Kushner** Daylight Miserable QZXDB2300005 (Virgin/UDS) ● (R.Kirwan)Miserable Worldwide (D.Kushner/H.Hubers/J.Fedryk/J.Williams)
8	13	15	**Harry Styles** As It Was Columbia USSM12200612 (UDS) ★3 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Universal/Pulse/One Year Yesterday (H.Styles/T.Hull/T.Johnson)
9	35	2	**Rudimental, Charlotte Plank...** Dancing Is...Room Two GBARL2300488 (UDS) (Rudimental/BillenTed/VibeChemistry/Shapes)BMG/Universal/Kobalt/Reservoir/SonyATV/CC (Dryden/Aggett/Bellis...)
10	7	10	**Rema & Selena Gomez** Calm Down Jonzing Worldwide/Mavin NGA3B2214004 (Virgin/UDS) ★ (Andre Vibez/London)Warner Chappell/Sony ATV (D.Ikubor/A.Uwaifo/M.Hunter)
11	4	6	**Libianca** People 5K QZTB52268087 (UDS) ★ (Mage the Producer/JAES)Sony/Kobalt (L.Kenzonkinboum Fonji/O. Moses Odia)
12	15	2	**Loreen** Tattoo Polydor SEUM72201638 (UDS) ● (Jansson/Boström/G:son)Peermusic/Warner Chappell/Kobalt/CC (Talhaoui/Thörnfeldt/Cazzi Opeia/Jansson/G:son/Boström)
13	New		**Kylie Minogue** Padam Padam BMG GB5KW2301017 (ADA Arvato) (Lostboy)Warner Chappell (I.Wroldsen/PJ Rycroft)
14	11	9	**Taylor Swift** Anti-Hero EMI USUG12205736 (UDS) ★ (J.Antonoff/T.Swift)Universal/Sony ATV (T.Swift/J.Antonoff)
15	5	3	**Lewis Capaldi** Wish You The Best Vertigo DEUV72300302 (UDS) ● (TMS/Capaldi)Sony ATV/BMG (L.Capaldi/JP Saxe/Malay)
16	12	3	**Fifty Fifty** Cupid Parlophone KSA012239180 (Arvato) ● (Siahn/Udin/Von Mentzer/Felländer-Tsai)CC (L.Udin/A.Von Mentzer/M.Felländer-Tsai/Siahn/Ahin/Keena)
17	6	4	**Ed Sheeran** Eyes Closed Atlantic GBAHS2300175 (Arvato) ● (A.Dessner/FRED/Max Martin/Shellback)Sony ATV/Kobalt/MXM/Sony (E.Sheeran/Shellback/F.Gibson/Max Martin)
18	New		**Hannah Laing & RoRo** Good Love WUGD GBUM72304092 (UDS) (H.Laing/J.Hurr)Universal/CC (P.Bascomb/H.Laing/J.Hurr/P.Harris/R.Griffith)
19	New		**Dua Lipa** Dance The Night (From Barbie The Album) Warner USATV2301509 (Arvato) (M.Ronson/Picard Brothers/A.Wyatt)Universal/Kobalt/Concord/SonyATV (Dua Lipa/C.Ailin/M.Ronson/A.Wyatt)
20	20	3	**David Guetta, Anne-Marie & Coi Leray** Baby Don't... Parlophone UKWLG2300016 (Arvato) ● (Guetta/T.Green/Hawkins)Sony ATV/Universal/MCA/Rokstone/Jackback (S.Mac/Guetta/Sheeran/McDaid/Leray/Hawkins...)
21	9	7	**PinkPantheress** Boy's A Liar Warner GBAYE2202560 (Arvato) ★ (Mura Masa/PinkPantheress)Sony ATV/BMG (G.Walker/A.Crossan)
22	10	7	**SZA** Kill Bill RCA/Top Dawg USRC12204584 (UDS) ★ (C.Lang/R.Bisel)Universal/Warner/Sony ATV (S.Rowe/C.Lang/R.Bisel)
23	New		**Lil Durk Ft J Cole** All My Life Ministry Of Sound USQX92302957 (UDS) (Dr. Luke)Sony ATV/Kobalt/CC (Banks/J.Cole/Gottwald/Valdes/Ogren/Lewis/Thomas)
24	14	7	**Raye Ft 070 Shake** Escapism Human Re Sources QMDA62217995 (The Orchard) ★ (M.Sabath)Warner Chappell/Sony ATV (R.Keen/M.Sabath/D.Balbuena)
25	18	3	**Post Malone** Chemical Republic USUM72305206 (UDS) (Post Malone/Bell/Watt)Universal/MCA/Kobalt (Post Malone/L.Bell/W.Walsh/A.Watt)
26	21	10	**David Guetta & Bebe Rexha** I'm Good (Blue) Parlophone UKWLG2000055 (Arvato) ★ (Guetta/Reznikov)Jackback/BMG/Sony ATV/Gz 2538 (Guetta/Purcell/Rexha/Plested/Randone/Lobina/Gabutti)
27	New		**Jorja Smith** Little Things FAMM QM6N22315660 (The Orchard) (P2J)/New Machine/DAMEDAME)EMI/Stellar/Sony/Kobalt/WarnerChap./CC (J.Smith/A.Jordan/B.Boko/E.Nelson/M.Stafford...)
28	Re-Entry		**Taylor Swift** Karma EMI USUG12205729 (UDS) ● (Antonoff/Swift/Sounwave/Keanu Beats/Sweet)Universal/Sony ATV/Kobalt/Sweet Life.. (Swift/Antonoff/Spears/Torres/Sweet)
29	New		**Dave & Central Cee** UK Rap Live Yours/Neighbourhood GBUM72305710 (UDS) (K.Evans)Warner Chapp./SonyATV/Universal/0207 (D.Omoregie/O.Caesar-Su/K.Evans)
30	New		**Dave & Central Cee** Trojan Horse Live Yours/Neighbourhood GBUM72305707 (UDS) (Dave)Warner Chapp./SonyATV (D.Omoregie/O.Caesar-Su)
31	22	9	**Venbee & Goddard** Messy In Heaven Columbia GBARL2201902 (UDS) ★ (A.Goddard/Tao/J.Manson)Kobalt/Sentric/Universal/Warner Chapp. (Doyle/Fable/Goddard/Cinti)
32	16	11	**The Weeknd** Die For You Republic/XO USUG11601011 (UDS) ★ (McKinney/Cirkut/Tesfaye/Cashmere Cat/Prince 85)SMP/Kobalt/Sony ATV/Universal/WMMW/.. (Tesfaye/Mckinney...)
33	27	13	**OneRepublic** I Ain't Worried Interscope USUM72206227 (UDS) ★ (Oscroft/Spry/Kutzle/Tedder)EMI/Downtown (B.Yttling/B.Kutzle/J.Eriksson/P.Morén/R.Tedder/T.Spry)
34	39	13	**LF System** Afraid To Feel Warner GBAHT2200492 (Arvato) ★2 (LF System)Warner Chappell/Universal (Finnigan/Larkman/Simmons/Jefferson/Roebuck)
35	66	3	**Jonas Brothers** Waffle House Republic USUG12301227 (UDS) (J.Bellion/P.Nappi)Sony ATV/Universal/Concord/Downtown (K.J&N.Jonas/Nappi/Cornet/Hein/Zmishlany/Tashian)
36	48	11	**Beyoncé** Cuff It Columbia/Parkwood Ent. USSM12206232 (UDS) ★ (Beyoncé/NovaWav/Rissi/Saadiq/The-Dream)SonyATV/EMI/WarnerChapp/Kobalt/Universal.. (Beyoncé/Andrews/Coney...)
37	53	32	**Glass Animals** Heat Waves Polydor GBUM72000433 (UDS) ★4 (Dave Bayley/P.Epworth)Beggars (D.Bayley)
38	24	4	**Jax Jones & Calum Scott** Whistle Polydor GBUM72202305 (UDS) ● (JaxJones/J.Maguire/J.Wilkinson/N.Applebaum)Kobalt/WarnerChapp./Universal/SonyATV (Lam/Maguire/Wilkinson...)
39	26	14	**George Ezra** Green Green Grass Columbia GB1102200463 (UDS) ★ (J.Pott/S.Price)Warner Chappell/BMG (G.Ezra/J.Pott/S.Price)
40	17	10	**Lewis Capaldi** Forget Me EMI DEUM72204717 (UDS) ★ (Capaldi/TMS)SonyATV/Warner Chapp./BMG (L.Capaldi/M.Pollack/B.Kohn/T.Barnes/P.Kelleher/P.Plested)
41	36	198	**The Killers** Mr Brightside Vertigo GBFFP0300052 (UDS) ★8 (Saltzman/The Killers)Universal. (Flowers/Keuning)
42	Re-Entry		**Harry Styles** Satellite Columbia USSM12200619 (UDS) ● (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Universal/Concord/Pulse (H.Styles/T.Hull/T.Johnson)
43	Re-Entry		**Taylor Swift** Cruel Summer EMI USUG11901472 (UDS) ● (A.Swift/J.Antonoff)Universal/Sony ATV/Peermusic (T.Swift/J.Antonoff/A.Clark)
44	34	25	**Ed Sheeran** Bad Habits Asylum GBAHS2100318 (Arvato) ★5 (Sheeran/FRED/McDaid)Sony ATV/Universal/Promised Land (E.Sheeran/J.McDaid/F.Gibson)
45	Re-Entry		**Harry Styles** Late Night Talking Columbia USSM12200610 (UDS) ★ (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson)Universal (H.Styles/T.Hull)
46	31	54	**Lewis Capaldi** Someone You Loved EMI DEUM71806776 (UDS) ★8 (TMS)Sony ATV/BMG (Capaldi/Roman/Kohn/Kelleher/Barnes)
47	19	7	**Miguel** Sure Thing Jive USJI10800160 (UDS) ★ (Happy Perez)Universal/MCA (N.Perez/M.J. Pimentel)
48	New		**Anne-Marie & Shania Twain** Unhealthy Atlantic/Asylum/EMI GBAHS2300381 (Arvato) (C. & R. McDonough)EMI/Kobalt (AM.Nicholson/C.McDonough/R.McDonough/tbc)
49	63	64	**Fleetwood Mac** Everywhere Warner USWB19900202 (Arvato) ★4 (L.Buckingham/R.Dashut)Universal (C.McVie)
50	64	102	**Coldplay** Viva La Vida Parlophone GBAYE0800265 (Arvato) ★4 (Dravs/Eno/Hopkins/Simpson)Universal. (Berryman/Buckland/Champion/Martin)
51	44	60	**Florence + The Machine** Dog Days Are Over Island GBUM70900209 (UDS) ★3 (Ford/Summers)Universal. (Welch/Summers)
52	Re-Entry		**Arctic Monkeys** Do I Wanna Know? Domino GBCEL1300332 (Integral UDS) ★4 (Ford/Orton) Sony ATV (Turner/Arctic Monkeys)
53	New		**The Weeknd, Playboi Carti & Madonna** Popular Interscope/Republic/XO USUG12303890 (UDS) (Metro Boomin/M.Dean/The Weeknd)tbc (Tesfaye/Flippin/Carter/MetroBoomin/Walker/Dean/Levinson/Madonna)
54	37	4	**Bakar** Hell N Back Black Butter GB1101901014 (UDS) ● (JakeTheSnake/Beach Noise)Kobalt/SonyATV/Bucks/CC (A.Shariff-Farr/M.Schaeffer/John Kosich/Jake Kosich/A.Boyd...)
55	43	11	**Eliza Rose & Interplanetary Criminal** B.O.T.A...Warner/X One House QZAKB2166405 (Arvato) ★ (Interplanetary Criminal)Warner Chappell/BMG/Supreme (E.Creese/Z.Bruce/R.Clivilles/D.Cole/R.Ramos/A.Friedman)
56	New		**Becky Hill & Lewis Thompson** Side Effects Polydor GBUM72302579 (UDS) (J.Shave/L.Thompson)Sony ATV/Kobalt/Warner Chapp./Universal (Hill/Shave/Poole/Thompson/Emenike)
57	56	9	**Stephen Sanchez** Until I Found You Republic USUG12103651 (UDS) ● (I.Fitchuk/K.Snyder)Universal MCA/Sony ATV (S.Sanchez/E.Beihold)
58	55	112	**Vance Joy** Riptide Atlantic AULI01385760 (Arvato) ★5 (Keogh/White/Castle)We Are unified PTY (Keogh)
59	New		**Byron Messia** Talibans Geffen/Simple Stupid QZFZ22348066 (UDS) (Kelly Beatz)Sony ATV/CC (D.Byron/C.Ogbuene)
60	46	22	**Ed Sheeran** Shivers Asylum GBAHS2100816 (Arvato) ★3 (E.Sheeran/Steve Mac/Fred again..)Sony ATV/Universal/Rokstone (E.Sheeran/S.Mac/J.McDaid/K.Lavelle)
61	New		**Lana Del Rey** Say Yes To Heaven Polydor GBUM72304564 (UDS) (R.Nowels)Universal/MCA (Lana Del Rey/R.Nowels)
62	28	5	**Mae Stephens** If We Ever Broke Up EMI GBUM72300969 (UDS) ● (Morgan Avenue)Sony/Bucks/Universal (M.Stephens/Morgan Avenue/N.Koronowska)
63	65	28	**Tears For Fears** Everybody Wants To Rule The World Mercury GBF088590110 (UDS) ★2 (Chris Hughes)BMG (I.Stanley/R.Orzabal/C.Hughes)
64	New		**Beyoncé & Kendrick Lamar** America Has A Problem Columbia/Parkwood Ent. USSM12206242 (UDS) (Beyoncé/The-Dream/M.Dean)Sony ATV/Warner Chappell/CC (B.Knowles/S.Carter/M.Dean/T.Nash/A.Rogers)
65	Re-Entry		**Arctic Monkeys** 505 Domino GBCEL0700074 (Integral UDS) ★2 (M.Crossey/J.Ford)EMI (A.Turner)
66	New		**J Hus** It's Crazy Black Butter GBARL2300469 (UDS) (Fumes Beats)Universal/Warner Chappell/CC (J Hus/Fumes Beats)
67	73	24	**Sam Fender** Seventeen Going Under Polydor GBUM72103036 (UDS) ★2 (B.Bronte)Kobalt (S.Fender)
68	Re-Entry		**Harry Styles** Watermelon Sugar Columbia USSM11912587 (UDS) ★3 (T.Johnson/Kid Harpoon) Universal/HSA/Songs by Cabin Mobile/Pulse/One Year Yesterday (Johnson/Hull/Rowland/Styles)
69	New		**Kali** Area Codes Atlantic USAT22301942 (Arvato) (Tate Kobang/YG! Beats)Sony ATV/CC (K.Ross/A.Cokley/K.Taylor/J.Goods)
70	23	5	**Lizzy McAlpine** Ceilings Harbour Artists & Music GBKPL2280163 (AWAL) ● (E.Ebbage/P.Etherington)Kobalt/Indigo (E.McAlpine)
71	30	7	**Metro Boomin, The Weeknd & 21 Savage** Creepin' Republic USUG12208791 (UDS) ● (Metro Boomin/DaHeala/P. Lee Johnson/J.lenox)EMI/SonyATV/Kobalt/WarnerChapp./CC (LT Wayne/21 Savage/DaHeala...)
72	Re-Entry		**Elton John & Dua Lipa** Cold Heart EMI/Warner GBUM72105353 (UDS) ★3 (PNAU)Universal/BMG (John/Taupin/Mayes/N&S.Littlemore/Meecham/Meredith)
73	41	51	**Tom Odell** Another Love Columbia GBARL1201887 (UDS) ★4 (Odell/Grech-Marguerat)Warner Chappell (Odell)
74	New		**Luude & Bru-C Ft Kevin Lyttle** TMO (Turn Me On) Warner GBAHT2300216 (Arvato) (Chase & Status/LUUDE)Concord (S.Milton/W.Kennard)
75	50	3	**Morgan Wallen** Last Night EMI USUG12300831 (UDS) (J.Moi/C.Handsome)Warner Chappell/Sony ATV/Kobalt (J.Byron/A.Gorley/J.Kasher Hindlin/R.Vojtesak)

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ANALYSIS

Music Week digs into the month's top chart stories...

When two become No.1: *Central Cee & Dave*

FAST TRACK

CENTRAL CEE & DAVE

Sprinter (Live Yours/Neighbourhood)

SALES: 335,885

01

Central Cee & Dave's surprise collaborative EP Split Decision made a big impression in June, with Sprinter racing clear as the month's top track thanks to a four-week stint at No.1. UK Rap (No.29, 77,118 sales) and Trojan Horse (No.30, 76,706 sales) also feature in our monthly list, which the pair capped off with a landmark performance at Glastonbury. Apart from 1,525 sales from downloads, Sprinter's to-date tally of 335,885 derives solely from streams. By the end of the month, the track had amassed more than 10 million streams across audio and video, in turn equalling the most weeks at No.1 by a UK hip-hop track, a record shared by Dave's Starlight and Dizzee Rascal's 2008 No.1 Dance Wiv Me (feat. Calvin Harris & Chrome).

IN A TRANCE

CALVIN HARRIS & ELLIE GOULDING

Miracle (Columbia)

SALES: 203,998

02

Sprinter's impressive run meant that the month's first chart week disappeared quickly into the distance, but it bears repeating that June's first weekly chart-topper was Calvin Harris & Ellie Goulding's trance-influenced Miracle, which topped the list for the sixth week in a row and eighth in total. Adding 203,998 sales, it finished the month at No.2 with a to-date return of 692,696.

Hus stop: *J Hus*

03

GOOD AS TOLD

J HUS (FEAT. DRAKE)

Who Told You (Black Butter)

SALES: 161,509

J Hus returned in style last month and will surely feature in our next monthly analysis once his third album Beautiful And Brutal Yard (out now) has had a chance to bed in. The East London rapper began his long-awaited comeback with single It's Crazy (No.66, 56,821 sales), followed by Drake collaboration Who Told You. Posting 161,509 sales, Who Told You is Hus' 20th hit and his fourth and highest-charting Top 10 single.

PADAM RIGHT

KYLIE MINOGUE

Padam (BMG)

SALES: 110,854

13

Kylie Minogue scored her first Top 10 hit since 2011 and her first solo Top 10 since 2010 with Padam Padam. The trailer for the star's 16th album Tension, Padam Padam is her 35th Top 10 hit since her 1988 debut. Minogue has now made the Top 10 in five decades – the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, 2010s and 2020s – equalling the female record held by Cher, Lulu and Diana Ross.

LOVED UP

HANNAH LAING & RORO

Good Love (WUGD/Polydor)

SALES: 97,622

18

Dance music's hold over the singles chart remains strong in 2023, with Polydor playing a key role. Hot on the heels of the major's success with Jazzy, its partnership with emerging Scottish producer Hannah Laing has yielded its first hit with Good Love, a collab with singer RoRo. Achieving a weekly peak of No.7, it finished at No.18 for the month.

LITTLE FEAT

JORJA SMITH

Little Things (FAMM)

SALES: 79,603

27

Jorja Smith releases her second album Falling Or Flying in September and latest hit Little Things is proving quite the appetiser. Peaking at No.15, it became the Walsall singer's second Top 20 hit in June, adding 79,603 sales to finish at No.27 in our rundown. With remixes by Nia Archives and DJ L Beat released towards the end of the month, the garage banger could yet prove to be one of the songs of the summer.

Flying high: *Jorja Smith*

PHOTOS: Andrew Timms, Elliot Hensford, Romany Francesca

Official Albums Chart

ALBUMS CHART TOP 75

JUNE CHART WEEKS 22-26

BRIT CERTIFIED PLATINUM, GOLD & SILVER AWARDS

★ Platinum (300,000)
● Gold (100,000)
● Silver (60,000)

Sales Increase · Highest Climber
+50% Sales Increase · Highest New Entry

TM	LM	MTHS	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL CATALOGUE NUMBER (DISTRIBUTOR) (PRODUCER)
1	New		**Foo Fighters** But Here We Are (Foo Fighters/G.Kurstin)
2	New		**Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds** Council Skies (N.Gallagher/P.Stacey)
3	6	14	**Harry Styles** Harry's House ★2 (Kid Harpoon/T.Johnson/S.Witte)
4	2	2	**Lewis Capaldi** Broken By Desire To Be Heavenly Sent ● (S.Mac/L.Capaldi/E.Holloway/Fat Max Gsus/MaxMartin/N.Atkinson/Mutt Lange/TMS/C.Bishop)
5	8	68	**Elton John** Diamonds ★4 (Dudgeon/John/Franks/Thomas/Michael/Leonard/Bell/T-Bone Burnett/Bellotte/Bacharach/C.Bayer Sager/Naraday...)
6	5	9	**Taylor Swift** Midnights ★2 (J.Antonoff/T.Swift/J.Sweet/B.Cook/Sounwave/Keanu Beats/A.Dessner)
7	4	29	**The Weeknd** The Highlights ★2 (The Weeknd/Max Martin/Holter/Payami/McKinney/Cirkut/Tesfaye/Dukes/Metro Boomin/Illangelo/Dre Moon...)
8	New		**Tom Grennan** What Ifs & Maybes (Wells/Falk/Bagnall/Bryer/Priddy/Scott/Riley/Thompson/LostBoy/Corry/Crew/Hannah/Green/Linvill/The Six/Digital Farm Animals...)
9	New		**Niall Horan** The Show (J.Ryan/J.Little/J.Bunetta/M.Zara/TMS)
10	20	116	**Arctic Monkeys** AM ★5 (Ford/Orton)
11	9	56	**Fleetwood Mac** 50 Years – Don't Stop ★3 (Fleetwood Mac/R.Dashut/K.Caillat)
12	18	11	**Beyoncé** Renaissance ● (Beyoncé/The-Dream/Duran/Dean/S1a0/Aossey/White/Dijon/Penny/Solomon/NovaWav/Rissi/Saadiq/Skrillex/Al Cres/Beam...)
13	1	2	**Ed Sheeran** (Subtract) – ● (A.Dessner/Fred again/Max Martin/Shellback)
14	29	43	**Harry Styles** Fine Line ★2 (Tyler Johnson/Kid harpoon/Witte/Kurstin/Bhasker)
15	11	7	**SZA** SOS ● (A.Atlantica/Buccellati/Babyface/Beat Butcha/benny blanco/B.Slatkin/BLK Beats/C.Lang/D.McKinnon/DJ Dahi/E.Rise...)
16	10	127	**Eminem** Curtain Call: The Hits ★9 (Eminem/Dr Dre/Resto/The 45 King & Louie/DJ Head/Elizondo/Bass/The Recording Academy/Mel-Man)
17	14	70	**Taylor Swift** 1989 ★5 (Swift/Taylor/Zancanella/MaxMartin/Shellback/Payami/Antonoff/Mattman & Robin/Kurstin/Chapman/Heap)
18	New		**McFly** Power To Play (D.Jones/J.Perry)
19	13	174	**ABBA** Gold – Greatest Hits ★21 (Andersson/Ulvaeus)
20	12	50	**Lewis Capaldi** Divinely Uninspired To A Hellish Extent ★5 (Atkinson/Holloway/Earp/Capaldi/TMS/Cook/Pillai/Sneddon/JR Ho)
21	17	43	**Taylor Swift** Lover ★ (Dukes/Bell/Swift/Antonoff/Little/Sounwave)
22	New		**Maisie Peters** The Good Witch (AFTERHRS/B.Ellis/Elvira/Ashurst/J.RubelM.Tellez/The Nocturns/O.Görres/Two Inch Punch)
23	21	114	**Oasis** Time Flies – 1994-2009 ★5 (Oasis/Coyle/Morris/Stent/Sardy/Gallagher)
24	New		**Queens Of The Stone Age** In Times New Roman... (Queens of the Stone Age)
25	24	112	**Queen** Greatest Hits ★24 (Baker/Queen/Mack)
26	25	22	**Michael Jackson** The Essential ★5 (Jones/Jackson/Various)
27	51	100	**Arctic Monkeys** Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not ★7 (Abbiss/Smyth)
28	15	20	**Ed Sheeran** = ★3 (E.Sheeran/S.Mac/J.McDaid/Parisi/Fred again../J.Rubel/L.Bell/Watt/B.Gibson/E.Anderfjärd/RØMANS/F.Vance)
29	28	28	**Taylor Swift** Reputation ★2 (Antonoff/Swift/Martin/Shellback/Payami/Görres/Holter)
30	16	2	**Post Malone** The Diamond Collection (Post Malone/Carter Lang/Ging/Illangelo/L.Bell/Metro Boomin/Tank God/Watt)
31	27	35	**Taylor Swift** Folklore ★ (Dessner/Antonoff/Swift)
32	31	118	**Fleetwood Mac** Rumours ★14 (Fleetwood Mac/R.Dashut/K.Caillat)
33	23	76	**Ed Sheeran** ÷ ★13 (Mac/Sheeran/Elizondo/Hicks/B.Blanco/McDaid/Killbeatz/Labrinth)
34	New		**James** Be Opened By The Wonderful (B.Williams/M.Hunter)
35	30	26	**Olivia Rodrigo** Sour ★2 (Dan Nigro/Alexander23/Jam City/A.Rodrigo)
36	38	45	**Lana Del Rey** Born To Die ★4 (Haynie/Parker/Berger/Robopop/Bhasker/Daly/Sneddon/Bauer-Mein/Nowels/Braide/Shux/Skarbek/Howe)
37	32	20	**Little Mix** Between Us ★ (S.Mac/Bloodshy/Taroncher/Guetta/Saint Fleur/Electric/Duars/Goldfingers/Reynolds/Ashurst/Kearns/Goldstein/Class...)
38	33	27	**The Weeknd** Starboy ★2 (The Weeknd/McKinney/Cirkut/B.Billions/Mano/M.Martin/Payami/B.Blanco/Cashmere Cat/Jake One/Swish/Labrinth...)
39	36	95	**Oasis** (What's The Story) Morning Glory? ★16 (Morris/Gallagher)
40	47	155	**Bob Marley & The Wailers** Legend ★14 (Bob Marley & The Wailers/C.Blackwell/E.Brown/J.Nuber/Scratch Perry)
41	35	11	**Eminem** Curtain Call 2 ● (Eminem/Aalias/Alex da Kid/Villasana/Battle Roy/BJ Burton/Boi-1da/d.a. got that dope/DJ Khalil/Dr. Dre/DVLP/Haynie...)
42	55	8	**Foo Fighters** The Essential ● (G.Norton/G.Kurstin/Foo Fighters/N.Raskulinecz/Butch Vig/B.Jones/A.Kasper)
43	37	41	**Elvis Presley** Elv1s: 30 #1 Hits ★7 (S.Sholes/E.Presley/L.Newman/W.Scharf/J.Leiber/M.Stoller/Chet Atkins/B.Porter/C.Moman/F.Jarvis/S.Phillips/R.Hull)
44	Re-Entry		**Arctic Monkeys** Favourite Worst Nightmare ★4 (Ford/Crossey)
45	3	2	**Nines** Crop Circle 2 (Beat Butcha/B.Miller/DannyGotThatJuice/E.Y/Flyo/J.Williams/Karlos/Mansur Brown/M.Booker/GX/R14/Show N Prove/Swifta...)
46	60	5	**Pink** Trustfall ● (D.Hodges/FRED/J.McDaid/M.Koma/A.Moore/S.Gooding/J.Fraites/W.Schultz/J.Shatkin/D.Baron/A Strut/Max Martin...)
47	New		**Noah Kahan** Stick Season (G.Simon/K.Snyder/N.Kahan)
48	39	24	**Whitney Houston** I Will Always Love You – The Best Of Whitney Houston ★ (Kashif/Masser/NM Walden/Babyface/"LA" Reid/Foster/Clivillés/Cole/Duplessis/Wyclef/Tricky/Kiriakou/Mason/Dupri/Cox...)
49	44	67	**Maroon 5** Singles ★2 (Maroon 5/Wallace/Endert/B.Blanco/MaxMartin/Shellback/Robopop/Stent/Farrar/Lange/Zancanella/Levine/MdL/Ammo...
50	40	7	**Metro Boomin** Heroes & Villains ● (Various)
51	74	61	**Pink** Greatest Hits – So Far!!! ★4 (Perry/Briggs/Austin/Storch/Armstrong/Fields/Mann/Machopsycho/Dr. Luke/Martin/Kasz Money/Pink/Danja/Shellback)
52	46	22	**50 Cent** Best Of ★ (Dr.Dre/Elizondo/Dirty Swift/ Mr.Porter/Dangerous LLC/Storch/B-Money "BS"/ Hi-Tek/C. Styles/Sire/Timbaland/Danja...)
53	66	76	**George Michael** Twenty Five ★5 (G.Michael)
54	New		**Lil Durk** Almost Healed (Various)
55	56	80	**Red Hot Chili Peppers** Greatest Hits ★6 (Rubin/Beinhorn)
56	New		**Texas** The Very Best Of 1989-2023 (Hedges/Fox/Texas/Palmer/Bjornsson/The Boilerhouse Boys/Austin/Stewart/Alexander/Silverman/McElhone/MacDonald/Michels)
57	53	89	**The Beatles** 1 ★13 (McCartney)
58	48	62	**Katy Perry** Teenage Dream ★5 (Dr. Luke/Blanco/Martin/StarGate/Stewart/Harrell/Ammo/Wells)
59	Re-Entry		**Harry Styles** Harry Styles ★ (Bhasker/Salibian/Johnson/Kid Harpoon)
60	New		**Pet Shop Boys** Smash: The Singles 1985-2020 (PetShopBoys/Lipson/Crichton/Price/Powell/Tomcraft/Horn/Xenomania/Adam F/Dawson/Richards/Higgins/Brothers in Rhythm....)
61	Re-Entry		**Kanye West** Graduation ★2 (West/Miller/Dean/DJ Toomp/Campbell/Robertson/Plain Pat/Hudson/Brion/Tommy D/Nottz/Daniels)
62	Re-Entry		**Sam Fender** Seventeen Going Under ● (B.Bronte/R.Costey)
63	54	80	**David Bowie** Legacy ★2 (Rodgers/Bowie/Visconti/Queen/Scott/Dudgeon/Maslin/Winstanley)
64	New		**Gunna** A Gift & A Curse (88Krazy/Angelo/AviatorKeyyz/Ayo Sim/Griffin/CuBeatz/DunkRock/EVRGRN/Flo/Stuntin/FreshAyr/Nils/Grand/Rance/Anthony...)
65	43	6	**Taylor Swift** Speak Now ★ (N.Chapman/T.Swift)
66	64	8	**Ella Henderson** Everything I Didn't Say ● (Riley/Jean-Marie/Mac & Phil/Two Inch Punch/TMS/S.de Jong/Decilveo/T.Scott/J.Carlsson/M.Kintish/S.Manovski/Green...)
67	59	16	**Taylor Swift** Red (Taylor's Version) ● (A.Dessner/B.Walker/C.Rowe/Danny D./D.Wilson/E.Anderfjärd/Espionage/J.Antonoff/Jacknife Lee/J.Bhasker/P.Mirkovich...)
68	Re-Entry		**Billy Joel** Piano Man – The Very Best Of Billy Joel ★4 (Ramone/Stewart/Joel/Jones)
69	New		**Far From Saints** Far From Saints (K.Jones/P.Lynn/D.Baker)
70	69	49	**Green Day** Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band ★ (Ernst/Green Day/Cavallo/Vig/B.J Armstrong)
71	Re-Entry		**Guns N' Roses** Greatest Hits ★8 (Guns N' Roses/M.Clink/B.Levenson/J.Mitchell/Duff McKagan/M.Gohl)
72	Re-Entry		**Tina Turner** Simply The Best ★8 (Britten/Hammond/CJ Mackintosh/Hartman/Dorrell/Lyle/Nitzsche/J.S. Carter/Spector/Davies/Hine)
73	75	72	**Dua Lipa** Dua Lipa ★3 (Kozmeniuk/Axident/Big Taste/Miguel/J.Reynolds/Digital Farm Animals/Principato/Levine/Wells/Grades/Kirkpatrick...)
74	Re-Entry		**Pitbull** Greatest Hits ● (Pitbull/Afrojack/Dr.Luke/Cirkut/Sermstyle/N.Seeley/N Fasano/TJR/C.Lake/J.Jonsin/S.Vee/RedOne/Rush/Jimmy Joker/SoulShock...)
75	73	64	**Oasis** Definitely Maybe ★8 (Oasis/Coyle/Morris)

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ANALYSIS

***Music Week* digs into the month's top chart stories...**

One by No.1: *Foo Fighters*

BATTLE ROYALE

FOO FIGHTERS

But Here We Are (Columbia)

SALES: 58,990

01

US and UK rock legends went head-to-head last month. Leadership swung between Foo Fighters and Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds during their opening week, though it was Dave Grohl and his band who emerged as the victors. But Here We Are pulled away with 44,513 sales to Council Skies' 39,642. Foo Fighters' sixth No.1 in total and third in a row, But Here We Are is their 11th consecutive Top 10 studio album. It is the band's first since drummer Taylor Hawkins died in March 2022. The album's opening week sale was 5% higher than the 42,486 copies for Medicine At Midnight in 2021. At the end of the month, there was also a Glastonbury boost for But Here We Are, which came top in June with 58,990 sales. NGHFB's Council Skies finished in second place (53,309).

BIG BREAK

LEWIS CAPALDI

Broken By Desire To Be Heavenly Sent (EMI)

SALES: 41,092

04

The fastest-selling album of the year started last month with a second consecutive week at the summit. Lewis Capaldi's sophomore LP, Broken By Desire To Be Heavenly Sent, added a further 41,092 sales in June to increase its total so far to 136,986. That makes it the biggest-selling 2023 release of the year at the halfway point, and No.6 overall. Following Capaldi's Glastonbury performance, Broken By Desire... rebounded 16-3 on the weekly chart. The album was No.4 overall last month, while Capaldi also secured three singles in the Top 50.

Catalogue numbers: *The Weeknd*

WEEKND ZONE

THE WEEKND

The Highlights (Island/Republic/XO)

SALES: 38,117

07

Still going strong in 2023, The Weeknd's hits collection finished the month at No.7 with 38,117 sales. But the significant result is a first place finish in the half-year rankings for The Highlights. The catalogue title, released in February 2021, has amassed a further 210,533 sales this year (the vast majority from streaming, as well as 4,741 physical copies and 186 downloads). Total sales for The Highlights are 650,247. Die For You, the resurgent 2016 single helping to power the collection on DSPs, passed a million sales last month (1,023,050).

DEFINITELY MAYBE

TOM GRENNAN

What Ifs & Maybes (Insanity)

SALES: 34,606

08

Tom Grennan scored a second consecutive No.1 with What Ifs & Maybes. Week one sales of 27,065 (15,750 CDs, 2,917 vinyl albums, 905 cassettes, 2,106 downloads and 5,387 sales-equivalent streams) were up 56% compared to its predecessor, Evering Road, in 2021. What Ifs & Maybes finished the month at No.8.

SHOW BUSINESS

09

NIALL HORAN

The Show (Capitol)

SALES: 32,021

Like Tom Grennan, Niall Horan made it two No.1s out of three album releases, with The Show registering his biggest weekly sale to date. Its opening tally of 26,937 (13,421 CDs, 8,866 vinyl albums, 557 cassettes, 596 digital downloads and 3,497 sales-equivalent streams) outperformed 2020's chart-topping predecessor Heartbreak Weather by 88%.

Good times: *Maisie Peters*

SPELLBOUND

MAISIE PETERS

The Good Witch (Atlantic/Gingerbread Man)

SALES: 20,760

22

Maisie Peters secured her first No.1 with The Good Witch, which sold 20,760 copies (9,475 CDs, 5,286 vinyl albums, 1,000 cassettes, 1,138 downloads and 3,861 sales-equivalent streams) in the final week of June. That's a 116% increase on the first week consumption for her 2021 debut, You Signed Up For This, which peaked at No.2.

PHOTOS: Alice Moitie, Danny clinch

JUNE CHART WEEKS 22-26

Music Week Market Shares

Artist Singles share for the month measures share of the Top 75 best performing tracks of the month, across sales and audio streams.
Artist Albums share for the month measures share of the Top 75 Official Albums Chart.
AES = Album Equivalent Sales. SEA = Stream Equivalent Albums

THIS MONTH'S CHART SHARE

TOP 75 CHART BY CORPORATE GROUP

SINGLES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	43.44%
2	SONY MUSIC	27.59%
3	WARNER MUSIC	17.51%
4	SONY/UNIVERSAL	2.55%
5	UNIVERSAL/WARNER	1.87%
	OTHERS	7.04%

ARTIST ALBUMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	41.93%
2	SONY MUSIC	29.56%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.82%
4	IGNITION	4.53%
5	DOMINO	4.39%
	OTHERS	3.77%

ALL ALBUMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	44.22%
2	SONY MUSIC	27.71%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.58%
4	IGNITION	4.46%
5	DOMINO	4.32%
	OTHERS	3.71%

TOP 75 CHART BY RECORD COMPANY

SINGLES
NO. 1 COLUMBIA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	COLUMBIA	14.91%
2	POLYDOR	13.86%
3	EMI	11.49%
4	NEIGHBOURHOOD	7.72%
5	WARNER RECORDS	6.83%
6	RCA	6.74%
7	ATLANTIC	5.37%
8	PARLOPHONE	5.30%
9	ISLAND	5.25%
10	VIRGIN MUSIC	4.16%
11	BLACK BUTTER/ISLAND	2.55%
12	RELENTLESS	2.16%
13	5K	1.93%
14	DOMINO	1.87%
15	BLACK BUTTER	1.85%
	OTHERS	8.00%

ARTIST ALBUMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	22.55%
2	RCA	11.21%
3	COLUMBIA	11.06%
4	POLYDOR	9.71%
5	ISLAND	7.74%
6	ATLANTIC	6.54%
7	DOMINO	4.39%
8	RHINO (WARNERS)	3.92%
9	WARNER RECORDS	3.88%
10	SOUR MASH	3.82%
11	BIG BROTHER	3.13%
12	INSANITY	2.48%
13	SONY MUSIC CG	1.68%
14	BMG	1.62%
15	PARLOPHONE	1.48%
	OTHERS	4.79%

ALL ALBUMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	22.18%
2	COLUMBIA	10.88%
3	RCA	10.34%
4	POLYDOR	9.55%
5	ISLAND	9.28%
6	ATLANTIC	7.15%
7	DOMINO	4.32%
8	RHINO (WARNERS)	3.85%
9	SOUR MASH	3.75%
10	WARNER RECORDS	3.13%
11	INSANITY	2.44%
12	BIG BROTHER	2.40%
13	UMR	2.10%
14	SONY MUSIC CG	1.66%
15	BMG	1.59%
	OTHERS	5.38%

THIS MONTH'S TOTAL MARKET SHARE

BY CORPORATE GROUP

SINGLES STREAMS
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	20.7%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.2%
4	BMG	1.2%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
	OTHERS	26.0%

SINGLES SALES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	32.8%
2	SONY MUSIC	21.0%
3	WARNER MUSIC	17.1%
4	BMG	3.4%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
	OTHERS	24.6%

ARTIST ALBUM SALES
NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	28.9%
2	SONY MUSIC	16.5%
3	WARNER MUSIC	14.9%
4	BMG	5.9%
5	IGNITION	3.6%
	OTHERS	30.3%

BY RECORD COMPANY

SINGLES STREAMS
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	10.5%
3	POLYDOR	9.2%
4	ISLAND	8.0%
5	COLUMBIA	6.9%
6	ATLANTIC	6.1%
7	WARNER RECORDS	4.1%
8	PARLOPHONE	3.0%
9	UMR	2.1%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.7%
11	SONY MUSIC CG	1.5%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.4%
13	DECCA	1.2%
14	DOMINO	0.9%
15	BMG	0.7%
	OTHERS	31.7%

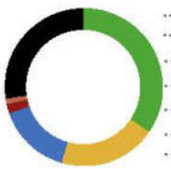
SINGLES SALES
NO. 1 RCA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	RCA	11.1%
2	EMI	10.8%
3	POLYDOR	8.4%
4	COLUMBIA	6.5%
5	ISLAND	6.4%
6	ATLANTIC	5.0%
7	WARNER RECORDS	4.8%
8	PARLOPHONE	4.5%
9	UMR	2.8%
10	BMG	2.6%
11	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.3%
12	SONY MUSIC CG	1.8%
13	DECCA	1.3%
14	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.1%
15	DOMINO	0.7%
	OTHERS	30.0%

ARTIST ALBUM SALES
NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.5%
2	COLUMBIA	6.5%
3	POLYDOR	5.3%
4	BMG	5.0%
5	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.6%
6	SONY MUSIC CG	4.1%
7	ATLANTIC	3.9%
8	ISLAND	3.6%
9	PARLOPHONE	3.6%
10	RCA	3.5%
11	SOUR MASH	3.0%
12	UMR	2.6%
13	WARNER RECORDS	2.4%
14	DECCA	2.2%
15	VIRGIN MUSIC	2.1%
	OTHERS	37.0%

AES (ALL ALBUMS)
TOTAL MARKET - THIS MONTH



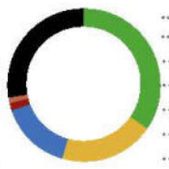
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.2%
2	SONY MUSIC	20.5%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.2%
4	BMG	1.8%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.3%
	OTHERS	26.0%

BY CORPORATE GROUP

1	EMI	11.0%
2	RCA	9.8%
3	POLYDOR	8.8%
4	ISLAND	7.5%
5	COLUMBIA	6.8%
6	ATLANTIC	5.8%
7	WARNER RECORDS	3.9%
8	PARLOPHONE	3.1%
9	UMR	2.4%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	2.0%
	OTHERS	38.9%

BY RECORD COMPANY

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS)



1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.0%
2	SONY MUSIC	20.4%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.3%
4	BMG	1.7%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.4%
	OTHERS	26.1%

BY CORPORATE GROUP

1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	9.9%
3	POLYDOR	8.8%
4	ISLAND	7.5%
5	COLUMBIA	6.9%
6	ATLANTIC	5.9%
7	WARNER RECORDS	4.0%
8	PARLOPHONE	3.1%
9	UMR	2.2%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.0%
	OTHERS	38.8%

BY RECORD COMPANY

MARKET STATISTICS - THIS MONTH

DATE	SINGLES				ARTIST ALBUMS				COMPS	ALL ALBUMS		
	SALES	AUDIO STREAMS	VIDEO STREAMS	TOTAL	PHYSICAL	DOWNLOADS	SEA2	TOTAL	TOTAL	SALES	SEA2	TOTAL
THIS MONTH	1,510,855	15,239,002,881	959,942,519	138,409,410	1,339,345	246,595	9,346,529	10,932,469	389,991	1,768,534	9,553,926	11,322,461
LAST MONTH	1,197,456	12,133,937,189	801,747,094	109,939,976	1,104,165	188,997	7,590,520	8,883,682	340,920	1,471,633	7,752,970	9,224,602
% CHANGE	26.2%	25.6%	19.7%	25.9%	21.3%	30.5%	23.1%	23.1%	14.4%	20.2%	23.2%	22.7%

Your essential guide to the market shares for this month and 2023. Compiled from Official Charts Company data.

Official Charts Company

YEAR-TO-DATE TOTAL MARKET SHARE

BY CORPORATE GROUP

COMPILATION SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	43.9%
2	SONY MUSIC	30.0%
3	BMG	4.4%
4	WARNER MUSIC	3.8%
5	DEMON MUSIC	1.4%
	OTHERS	16.7%

ALL ALBUM SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	30.4%
2	SONY MUSIC	17.8%
3	WARNER MUSIC	13.7%
4	BMG	5.7%
5	IGNITION	3.2%
	OTHERS	29.0%

SINGLES STREAMS NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.4%
2	SONY MUSIC	20.6%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.0%
4	BMG	1.1%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.1%
	OTHERS	26.7%

SINGLES SALES NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	32.7%
2	SONY MUSIC	21.9%
3	WARNER MUSIC	16.5%
4	BMG	2.4%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.0%
	OTHERS	25.5%

AES (ALL ALBUMS) NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.2%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.9%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.1%
4	BMG	2.0%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.4%
	OTHERS	26.4%

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS) NO. 1 UNIVERSAL

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	UNIVERSAL MUSIC	35.0%
2	SONY MUSIC	19.6%
3	WARNER MUSIC	15.4%
4	BMG	1.9%
5	XL BEGGARS	1.4%
	OTHERS	26.7%

BY RECORD COMPANY

COMPILATION SALES NO. 1 SONY CG

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	SONY MUSIC CG	25.5%
2	EMI	20.1%
3	UMR	14.8%
4	POLYDOR	4.4%
5	BMG	3.3%
6	COLUMBIA	2.9%
7	DECCA	2.1%
8	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.6%
9	DEMON MUSIC	1.4%
10	NEW STATE	1.3%
11	RCA	1.3%
12	CHERRY RED	1.2%
13	ISLAND	1.2%
14	ATLANTIC	1.0%
15	UNION SQUARE	0.9%
	OTHERS	16.9%

ALL ALBUM SALES NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	11.5%
2	SONY MUSIC CG	6.3%
3	COLUMBIA	6.1%
4	POLYDOR	5.3%
5	BMG	4.8%
6	RHINO (WARNERS)	4.3%
7	UMR	3.9%
8	ATLANTIC	3.6%
9	ISLAND	3.4%
10	PARLOPHONE	3.3%
11	RCA	3.2%
12	SOUR MASH	2.7%
13	DECCA	2.2%
14	WARNER RECORDS	2.2%
15	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.9%
	OTHERS	35.3%

SINGLES STREAMS NO. 1 RCA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	RCA	10.8%
2	EMI	10.8%
3	POLYDOR	9.3%
4	ISLAND	7.9%
5	COLUMBIA	6.5%
6	ATLANTIC	6.2%
7	WARNER RECORDS	3.9%
8	PARLOPHONE	2.8%
9	UMR	2.2%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	1.7%
11	SONY MUSIC CG	1.6%
12	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.5%
13	DECCA	1.4%
14	DOMINO	0.7%
15	BMG	0.7%
	OTHERS	32.2%

SINGLES SALES NO. 1 RCA

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	RCA	12.7%
2	EMI	11.4%
3	POLYDOR	8.0%
4	ISLAND	6.4%
5	COLUMBIA	5.8%
6	ATLANTIC	5.5%
7	WARNER RECORDS	4.1%
8	PARLOPHONE	4.0%
9	UMR	2.5%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.3%
11	SONY MUSIC CG	1.9%
12	BMG	1.5%
13	DECCA	1.4%
14	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.0%
15	XL RECORDINGS	0.5%
	OTHERS	30.9%

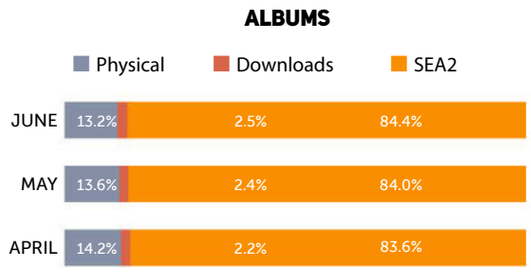
AES (ALL ALBUMS) NO. 1 EMI

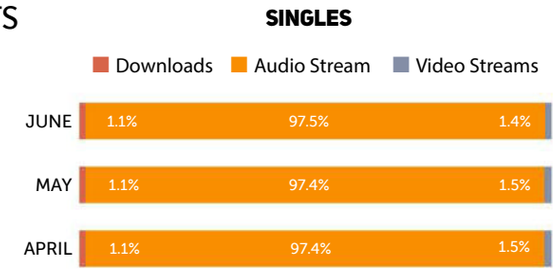
TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	11.1%
2	RCA	9.5%
3	POLYDOR	8.7%
4	ISLAND	7.0%
5	COLUMBIA	6.3%
6	ATLANTIC	5.7%
7	WARNER RECORDS	3.7%
8	PARLOPHONE	3.0%
9	UMR	2.7%
10	SONY MUSIC CG	2.5%
11	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.3%
12	DECCA	1.6%
13	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.5%
14	BMG	1.4%
15	DOMINO	0.7%
	OTHERS	32.3%

AES (ARTIST ALBUMS) NO. 1 EMI

TW	COMPANY	SHARE
1	EMI	10.9%
2	RCA	9.6%
3	POLYDOR	8.9%
4	ISLAND	7.2%
5	COLUMBIA	6.4%
6	ATLANTIC	5.8%
7	WARNER RECORDS	3.8%
8	PARLOPHONE	3.1%
9	UMR	2.4%
10	RHINO (WARNERS)	2.3%
11	SONY MUSIC CG	1.9%
12	DECCA	1.5%
13	VIRGIN MUSIC	1.5%
14	BMG	1.3%
15	DOMINO	0.8%
	OTHERS	32.6%

FORMAT SPLITS





MARKET STATISTICS - YEAR-TO-DATE

DATE	SINGLES				ARTIST ALBUMS				COMPS	ALL ALBUMS		
	SALES	AUDIO STREAMS	VIDEO STREAMS	TOTAL	PHYSICAL	DOWNLOADS	SEA2	TOTAL	TOTAL	SALES	SEA2	TOTAL
THIS YEAR	7,745,577	75,569,125,524	4,914,238,247	685,055,223	6,939,055	1,177,960	46,957,708	55,074,723	1,969,688	9,137,628	47,906,784	57,044,412
LAST YEAR	8,758,350	68,345,577,230	5,071,872,202	626,166,532	6,804,715	1,248,354	42,292,829	50,345,898	2,236,376	9,280,251	43,302,023	52,582,274
% CHANGE	-11.6%	10.6%	-3.1%	9.4%	2.0%	-5.6%	11.0%	9.4%	-11.9%	-1.5%	10.6%	8.5%

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OFFICIAL UK STREAMING TOP 50

Official Streaming Chart

DAVE & CENTRAL CEE

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Dave & Central Cee	Sprinter	*Live Yours/Neighbourhood*
2	Calvin Harris & Ellie Goulding	Miracle	*Columbia*
3	J Hus Ft Drake	Who Told You	*Black Butter/OVO/Republic*
4	Jazzy	Giving Me	*Chaos*
5	David Kushner	Daylight	*Miserable*
6	Miley Cyrus	Flowers	*RCA*
7	Harry Styles	As It Was	*Columbia*
8	Switch Disco & Ella Henderson	React	*Relentless*
9	Rudimental, Charlotte Plank & Vibe Chemistry	Dancing Is Healing	*Room Two*
10	Rema & Selena Gomez	Calm Down	*Jonzing Worldwide/Mavin*
11	Libianca	People	*5K*
12	Fifty Fifty	Cupid	*Parlophone*
13	Taylor Swift	Anti-Hero	*EMI*
14	Loreen	Tattoo	*Polydor*
15	Hannah Laing & RoRo	Good Love	*WUGD*
16	Ed Sheeran	Eyes Closed	*Atlantic*
17	PinkPantheress	Boy's A Liar	*Warner*
18	SZA	Kill Bill	*RCA/Top Dawg*
19	Lewis Capaldi	Wish You The Best	*Vertigo*
20	David Guetta, Anne-Marie & Coi Leray	Baby Don't Hurt Me	*Parlophone*
21	Dua Lipa	Dance The Night	*Warner*
22	Raye Ft 070 Shake	Escapism	*Human Re Sources*
23	Kylie Minogue	Padam Padam	*BMG*
24	The Weeknd	Die For You	*Republic/XO*
25	Lil Durk Ft J. Cole	All My Life	*Ministry Of Sound*
26	David Guetta & Bebe Rexha	I'm Good (Blue)	*Parlophone*
27	Post Malone	Chemical	*Republic*
28	Venbee & Goddard	Messy In Heaven	*Columbia*
29	Dave & Central Cee	UK Rap	*Live Yours/Neighbourhood*
30	OneRepublic	I Ain't Worried	*Interscope*
31	Dave & Central Cee	Trojan Horse	*Live Yours/Neighbourhood*
32	Jorja Smith	Little Things	*FAMM*
33	Taylor Swift	Karma	*EMI*
34	Glass Animals	Heat Waves	*Polydor*
35	LF System	Afraid To Feel	*Warner*
36	Beyoncé	Cuff It	*Columbia/Parkwood Ent.*
37	Miguel	Sure Thing	*Jive*
38	The Killers	Mr Brightside	*Vertigo*
39	Lewis Capaldi	Someone You Loved	*EMI*
40	Jonas Brothers	Waffle House	*Republic*
41	Lewis Capaldi	Forget Me	*EMI*
42	George Ezra	Green Green Grass	*Columbia*
43	Ed Sheeran	Bad Habits	*Asylum*
44	Taylor Swift	Cruel Summer	*EMI*
45	Harry Styles	Late Night Talking	*Columbia*
46	Harry Styles	Satellite	*Columbia*
47	Coldplay	Viva La Vida	*Parlophone*
48	Jax Jones & Calum Scott	Whistle	*Polydor*
49	Bakar	Hell N Back	*Black Butter*
50	Arctic Monkeys	505	*Domino*

OFFICIAL COMPILATIONS TOP 50

TM	TITLE	LABEL	DISTRIBUTOR
1	Eurovision Song Contest: Liverpool 2023	UMR	UDS
2	Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix 3 – OST	Hollywood	UDS
3	The Greatest Showman OST	Atlantic	Arvato
4	Now Yearbook 1978	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
5	Now That's What I Call Music! 114	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
6	Mamma Mia!	Polydor	UDS
7	Hamilton	Atlantic	Arvato
8	Suicide Squad: The Album	Atlantic	Arvato
9	Moana	Walt Disney	UDS
10	Now That's What I Call Eurovision Song...	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
11	Encanto OST	Walt Disney	UDS
12	The Official Album Of The Coronation	Decca	UDS
13	Frozen OST	Walt Disney	UDS
14	Six: The Musical	Loud Mouth	Absolute UDS
15	Jukebox Party	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
16	The Lion King	Walt Disney	UDS
17	Frozen II – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
18	Now That's What I Call Massive Hits & #1s	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
19	Fifty Shades Of Grey	Republic	UDS
20	Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again	Polydor	UDS
21	The Hits Album: The Country Album	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
22	Grease	Polydor	UDS
23	Disney's Lullaby Album	Walt Disney	UDS
24	Eurovision Song Contest: Turin 2022	UMR	UDS
25	Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical – OST	Sony Classical	UDS
26	Sing – OST	Republic	UDS
27	Phil Collins Plays Well With Others	Rhino	Arvato
28	A Star Is Born	Interscope	UDS
29	Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix 1 – OST	Hollywood	UDS
30	Now That's What I Call Music! 113	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
31	Now #1s	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
32	Sing 2	Island	UDS
33	The Hits Album: 70s Pop Album – The Star Hits	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
34	Crown & Glory	Decca	UDS
35	The New Wave Album	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
36	Aladdin – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
37	Now That's What I Call A Massive 80s Party	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
38	Top Gun: Maverick	Polydor	UDS
39	The Fault In Our Stars – OST	Atlantic	Arvato
40	Now That's What I Call Music! 14	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
41	Eurovision Song Contest: Rotterdam 2021	UMR	UDS
42	The Best 70s Rock Album	Sony Music CG/Spectrum	UDS
43	The Greatest Showman Reimagined	Atlantic	Arvato
44	Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse (OST)	Republic	UDS
45	Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix 2 – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
46	Descendants 3 – OST	Walt Disney	UDS
47	Classic Pop: The Ultimate Collection	The Ultimate Collection USM	ADA Arvato
48	Now That's What I Call 60s Pop	Sony Music CG/EMI	UDS
49	Dear Evan Hansen	Atlantic	ADA Arvato
50	Wicked	Decca	UDS

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Official Charts Company

OFFICIAL VINYL TOP 50s

OFFICIAL VINYL SINGLES

PHOTO: Mirrorpix, Getty

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Sex Pistols	Anarchy In The UK	Universal Music Rec.
2	Lewis Capaldi	Wish You The Best	Vertigo
3	Donna Summer	Love To Love You Baby	Island
4	Rob Grant & Lana Del Rey	Hollywood Bowl	Decca
5	Rob Grant & Lana Del Rey	Lost At Sea	Decca
6	Stone Foundation	B What U R	100%
7	T-Rex	The Groover	Crimson
8	Beabadoobee	Cologne	Dirty Hit
9	Curve	Missing Link	RCA
10	Jorja Smith	Little Things	FAMM
11	T-Rex	20th Century Boy	Crimson
12	Ghost	Kiss The Go-Goat	Loma Vista
13	Layo & Bushwacka!	Love Story (V.S. Finally)	XL
14	New Order	Blue Monday	Rhino
15	Sam Fender	Wild Grey Ocean	Polydor
16	ABBA	Ring Ring	Polar
17	The 1975	The City	Dirty Hit/Polydor
18	Curve	Superblaster	RCA
19	Joy Division	Love Will Tear Us Apart	Rhino
20	Arctic Monkeys	I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor	Domino
21	Khruangbin & Leon Bridges	Texas Sun	Dead Oceans
22	Arctic Monkeys	Leave Before The Lights Come On	Domino
23	Augustus Pablo	Pablo Meets Mr Bassie	Rough Trade
24	Arctic Monkeys	Why'd You Only Call Me When You're High?	Domino
25	Royal Blood	Limbo	Warner
26	The Lurkers	Then I Kissed Her	Damaged Goods
27	Arctic Monkeys	Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino	Domino
28	The Specials	Ghost Town	Chrysalis
29	Arctic Monkeys	Cornerstone	Domino
30	Bombay Bicycle Club & The Staves	Road	Chrysalis
31	Cigarettes After Sex	Nothing's Gonna Hurt You Baby	Spanish Prayers
32	Girls Aloud	Sound Of The Underground	Polydor
33	S Club	Don't Stop Movin'	Universal Music Rec.
34	Arctic Monkeys	Fluorescent Adolescent	Domino
35	Fleetwood Mac	Albatross	Sony Music CG
36	Arctic Monkeys	One For The Road	Domino
37	Galen & Paul	Hacia Arriba	Sony Music CG
38	Rianne Downey	Fuel To The Flame	Run On
39	Everything But The Girl	Nothing Left To Lose	Buzzin' Fly
40	Galen & Paul	A Sea Shanty	Sony Music CG
41	Galen & Paul	Lonely Town	Sony Music CG
42	Chemical Brothers	No Reason	EMI
43	Arctic Monkeys	Do I Wanna Know?	Domino
44	Whitelands	Setting Sun	Sonic Cathedral
45	Don Letts	Outta Sync	Cooking Vinyl
46	Yardbirds	Happenings Ten Years Time Ago	DMG TV
47	ABBA	People Need Love	Polar
48	ABBA	Love Isn't Easy (But It Sure Is Hard Enough)	Polar
49	Tom Grennan	Here	Insanity
50	Guns N' Roses	Hard Skool	Geffen

OFFICIAL VINYL ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Noel Gallagher's High Flying...	Council Skies	Sour Mash
2	Foo Fighters	But Here We Are	Columbia
3	Niall Horan	The Show	Capitol
4	Queens Of The Stone Age	In Times New Roman...	Matador
5	Maisie Peters	The Good Witch	Atlantic/Gingerbread Man
6	Elton John	Diamonds	Mercury/UMR
7	James	Be Opened By The Wonderful	Nothing But Love
8	Tom Grennan	What Ifs & Maybes	Insanity
9	Arlo Parks	My Soft Machine	Transgressive
10	Sparks	The Girl Is Crying In Her Latte	Island
11	Little Simz	No Thank You	Forever Living Originals
12	McFly	Power To Play	BMG
13	Far From Saints	Far From Saints	Ignition
14	King Krule	Space Heavy	XL
15	Baxter Dury	I Thought I Was Better Than You	Heavenly
16	Squid	O Monolith	Warp
17	Fleetwood Mac	Rumours	WEA
18	The Royston Club	Shaking Hips And Crashing Cars	Modern Sky/Run On
19	Girls Aloud	Sound Of The Underground	Polydor/UMR
20	Texas	The Very Best Of 1989-2023	PIAS
21	Arctic Monkeys	AM	Domino
22	Christine & The Queens	Paranoïa, Angels, True Love	Because
23	Harry Styles	Harry's House	Columbia
24	Lewis Capaldi	Broken By Desire To Be Heavenly Sent	EMI
25	Pet Shop Boys	Smash: The Singles 1985-2020	Parlophone
26	Pink Floyd	The Dark Side Of The Moon	Rhino
27	Taylor Swift	Midnights	EMI
28	Mike Oldfield	Tubular Bells	Virgin
29	Sam Fender	Hypersonic Missiles	Polydor
30	Bob Dylan	Shadow Kingdom	Sony Music CG
31	Ben Howard	Is It?	Island
32	The Jam	In The City	Polydor
33	Various	Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix 3 – OST	Hollywood
34	Dream Wife	Social Lubrication	Lucky Number
35	Roger Waters	The Lockdown Sessions	Sony Music CG
36	Lana Del Rey	Did You Know That There's A Tunnel Under...	Polydor
37	Sophie Ellis-Bextor	Hana	Cooking Vinyl
38	Jake Shears	Last Man Dancing	Mute
39	This Is The Kit	Careful Of Your Keepers	Rough Trade
40	Arctic Monkeys	Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not	Domino
41	Charli XCX	True Romance	Asylum
42	Extreme	Six	earMUSIC
43	Various	Guardians Of The Galaxy: Awesome Mix 1 – OST	Hollywood
44	Amy Winehouse	Back To Black	Island
45	Avril Lavigne	Let Go	Music On CD
46	Pulp	Different Class	Simply Vinyl
47	Taylor Swift	Reputation	EMI
48	Gary Numan	Telekon	Beggars Banquet
49	Yusuf/Cat Stevens	King Of A Land	BMG
50	Simply Red	Time	Rhino

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SPECIALIST ALBUMS TOP 20s

Official Charts Company

OFFICIAL AMERICANA TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: Aysia Marotta

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Noah Kahan	Stick Season	Island
2	Far From Saints	Far From Saints	Ignition
3	Bob Dylan	Shadow Kingdom	Sony Music CG
4	Boygenius	The Record	Interscope
5	The Teskey Brothers	The Winding Way	Decca
6	Jason Isbell & The 400 Unit	Weathervanes	Southeastern
7	This Is The Kit	Careful Of Your Keepers	Rough Trade
8	Paul Simon	Seven Psalms	Sony Music CG
9	Jenny Lewis	Joy'All	EMI
10	Zach Bryan	American Heartbreak	Warner
11	Rufus Wainwright	Folkocracy	BMG
12	Bruce Springsteen	Only The Strong Survive	Columbia
13	Luke Morley	Songs From The Blue Room	Conquest
14	Bailey Zimmerman	Religiously. The Album.	Parlophone
15	Ben Folds	What Matters Most	New West
16	Sheryl Crow	Sheryl: Music From The Feature Documentary	Polydor/UMR
17	Cowboy Junkies	Such Ferocious Beauty	Cooking Vinyl
18	The War On Drugs	I Don't Live Here Anymore	Atlantic
19	Gov't Mule	Peace... Like A River	Fantasy
20	Rodrigo Y Gabriela	In Between Thoughts... A New World	ATO

OFFICIAL CLASSICAL ARTIST TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: William Waterworth

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Max Richter	Sleep	Deutsche Grammophon
2	Alan Menken	The Little Mermaid – OST	Walt Disney
3	Ludovico Einaudi	Islands: Essential Einaudi	Decca
4	Rob Grant	Lost At Sea	Decca
5	Ludovico Einaudi	Underwater	Decca
6	Ludovico Einaudi	In A Time Lapse	Decca
7	Max Richter	Voyager: Essential	Deutsche Grammophon
8	Ludovico Einaudi	Undiscovered: Vol. 2	Decca
9	Jóhann Jóhannsson	The Theory Of Everything – OST	Back Lot
10	Ludovico Einaudi	Una Mattina	Decca
11	Howard Shore	The Lord Of The Rings: Trilogy – OST	Reprise
12	Max Richter	The Blue Notebooks	Deutsche Grammophon
13	Hans Zimmer & Lisa Gerrard	Gladiator – OST	Decca
14	Ludovico Einaudi	Cinema	Decca
15	LPO/Parry	The 50 Greatest Pieces Of Classical	X5
16	London Philharmonic Orchestra	Spatial Audio: 3D Classical Collection	Warner Classics
17	Howard Shore	The Lord Of The Rings – OST	Reprise
18	Andre Rieu & Johann Strauss Or	My Music My World: The Very Best Of	Decca
19	Chad Lawson	Breathe	Decca
20	Ludovico Einaudi	Divenire	Decca

OFFICIAL HIP-HOP & R&B TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	The Weeknd	The Highlights	Republic/XO
2	SZA	SOS	RCA
3	Eminem	Curtain Call: The Hits	Interscope
4	Post Malone	The Diamond Collection	Republic
5	The Weeknd	Starboy	Republic/XO
6	Eminem	Curtain Call 2	Interscope
7	Nines	Crop Circle 2	Warner
8	Whitney Houston	I Will Always Love You – The Best Of..	Arista
9	Metro Boomin	Heroes & Villains	Island
10	50 Cent	Best Of	Polydor/UMR
11	Lil Durk	Almost Healed	Ministry Of Sound
12	Kanye West	Graduation	Roc-A-Fella
13	Gunna	A Gift & A Curse	300 Ent.
14	50 Cent	Get Rich Or Die Tryin'	Interscope
15	The Weeknd	After Hours	Republic/XO
16	Xxxtentacion	Look At Me: The Album	Columbia
17	Nicki Minaj	Queen Radio: Volume 1	Island
18	Drake	Certified Lover Boy	OVO/Republic
19	Potter Payper	Real Back In Style	0207
20	Pop Smoke	Shoot For The Stars Aim For The Moon	Republic

OFFICIAL JAZZ TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: Getty

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Glenn Miller	From Rags To Riches	Jazz Band
2	Sade	The Best Of	Epic
3	Sade	Lovers Live	Epic
4	Norah Jones	Come Away With Me	Blue Note
5	Nina Simone	The Very Best Of	RCA/UCJ
6	Nina Simone	See-Line Woman: The Best Of	Spectrum
7	Sade	Lovers Rock	Epic
8	Nina Simone	Feeling Good	Verve
9	Ella Fitzgerald	Gold	Verve
10	Miles Davis	Kind Of Blue	Columbia
11	Amy Winehouse	Frank	Island
12	Ray Charles	The Ultimate Collection	Not Now
13	Sade	Love Deluxe	Epic
14	Norah Jones	iTunes Originals	Virgin
15	Gregory Porter	Still Rising: The Collection	Decca
16	Pat Metheny	Dream Box	BMG
17	Frank Sinatra	A Man And His Music	Universal Music Recordings
18	Nat King Cole	Stardust	Woowi
19	Nat King Cole	The Unforgettable	Virgin
20	Various	Burlesque – OST	RCA

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SPECIALIST ALBUMS TOP 20s

OFFICIAL COUNTRY ARTIST TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Far From Saints	Far From Saints	Ignition
2	Luke Combs	Gettin' Old	Sony Music CG
3	Taylor Swift	Fearless (Taylor's Version)	EMI
4	Morgan Wallen	One Thing At A Time	EMI
5	Taylor Swift	Fearless	Mercury
6	Luke Combs	This One's For You	Sony Music CG
7	Luke Combs	What You See Is What You Get	Sony Music CG
8	Taylor Swift	Taylor Swift	Mercury
9	Shania Twain	Come On Over	Mercury
10	Luke Combs	Growin' Up	Sony Music CG
11	Morgan Wallen	Dangerous: The Double Album	EMI
12	Zach Bryan	American Heartbreak	Warner
13	Glen Campbell	Adiós	Universal Music Recordings
14	Glen Campbell	Gentle On My Mind	UMR/Virgin
15	Chris Stapleton	Traveller	Mercury Nashville
16	Bailey Zimmerman	Religiously. The Album.	Parlophone
17	The Chicks	Wide Open Spaces	Epic
18	Dolly Parton	Dumplin' – OST	Sony Music CG
19	Jelly Roll	Whitsitt Chapel	Broken Bow
20	Jordan Davis	Bluebird Days	Snakefarm

OFFICIAL DANCE TOP 20 ALBUMS

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Tiësto	Drive	Atlantic
2	David Guetta	One Love	Parlophone
3	Sigala	Every Cloud – Silver Linings	Ministry Of Sound
4	Calvin Harris	18 Months	Columbia
5	Fred Again..	USB	Atlantic
6	Robin Schulz	Prayer	Atlantic
7	David Guetta	Nothing But The Beat	Parlophone
8	David Guetta	Nothing But The Beat 2.0	Parlophone
9	The Prodigy	Their Law: The Singles 1990-2005	XL
10	Jax Jones	Snacks	Polydor
11	Drake	Honestly, Nevermind	OVO/Republic
12	Calvin Harris	Motion	Columbia
13	Sigala	Brighter Days	Ministry Of Sound
14	Jonas Blue	Blue	Positiva
15	Fatboy Slim	Why Try Harder: The Greatest Hits	Skint
16	Major Lazer	Essentials	Because
17	Dannii Minogue	Neon Nights	London Music Stream
18	Fred Again..	Actual Life 3 (Jan 1 – Sep 9 2022)	Atlantic
19	Black Eyed Peas	The Beginning	Interscope
20	Bad Boy Chiller Crew	Disrespectful	Relentless

OFFICIAL FOLK TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: Cedric Oberlin

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	This Is The Kit	Careful Of Your Keepers	Rough Trade
2	Shirley Collins	Archangel Hill	Domino
3	The Levellers Collective	Together All The Way	On The Fiddle
4	Lankum	False Lankum	Rough Trade
5	Skerryvore	Tempus	Cooking Vinyl
6	Billie Marten	Drop Cherries	Fiction
7	The Mary Wallopers	The Mary Wallopers	BC
8	Marcus Mumford	(Self-Titled)	Island
9	Lisa O'Neill	All Of This Is Chance	Rough Trade
10	Jim Ghedi & Toby Hay	Jim Ghedi & Toby Hay	Topic
11	The Longest Johns	Smoke & Oakum	Decca
12	Passenger	Birds That Flew And Ships That Sailed	Black Crow
13	Kate Rusby	30: Happy Returns	Pure
14	The Unthanks	Sorrows Away	RabbleRouser
15	Lauren MacColl	Haar	Make Believe
16	Angeline Morrison	The Sorrow Songs: Folk Songs Of Black...	Topic
17	The Young'uns	Tiny Notes	Hudson
18	Merry Hell	Let The Music Speak For Itself	Merry Hell
19	Elephant Sessions	For The Night	Elephant Sessions
20	Duncan Chisholm	Black Cuillin	Copperfish

OFFICIAL ROCK & METAL TOP 20 ALBUMS

PHOTO: Danny Clinch

TM	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	Foo Fighters	But Here We Are	Columbia
2	Queens Of The Stone Age	In Times New Roman	Matador
3	Foo Fighters	The Essential	Sony Music CG
4	Green Day	Greatest Hits: God's Favorite Band	Reprise
5	Guns N' Roses	Greatest Hits	Geffen
6	Sleep Token	Take Me Back To Eden	Spinefarm
7	Nirvana	Nirvana	Geffen
8	Blink 182	Greatest Hits	Geffen
9	Nirvana	Nevermind	Geffen/UMR
10	AC/DC	Iron Man 2 – OST	Columbia
11	Avenged Sevenfold	Life Is But A Dream	Warner
12	Metallica	Metallica	Vertigo
13	Guns N' Roses	Appetite For Destruction	Polydor/UMR
14	Metallica	72 Seasons	EMI
15	Slipknot	Antennas To Hell	Roadrunner
16	Extreme	Six	earMUSIC
17	Linkin Park	Hybrid Theory	Warner
18	Nickelback	The Best Of: Vol. 1	Rhino
19	Led Zeppelin	Mothership	Rhino
20	Green Day	American Idiot	Reprise

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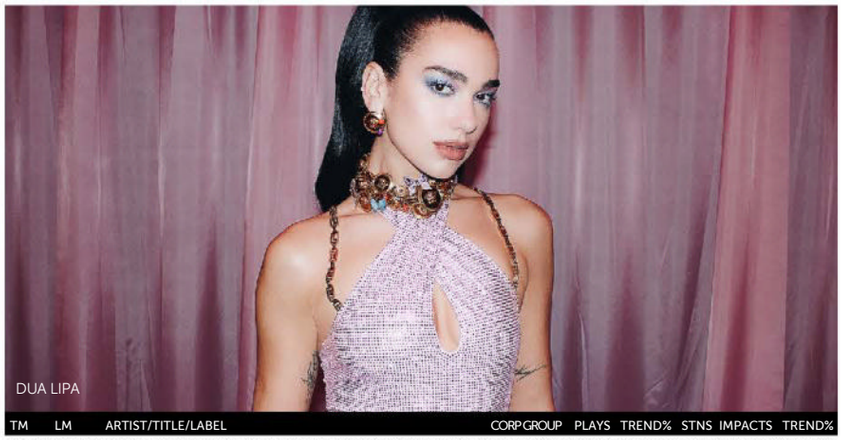
UK AIRPLAY

CHARTS KEY
HIGHEST NEW ENTRY
HIGHEST CLIMBER
PLAY/AUDIENCE INCREASE
TREND INCREASE +50%

RADIO MONITOR we're always listening

Music Week's UK and EU Radio Airplay chart based on RadioMonitor data ©.

UK RADIO AIRPLAY TOP 50


DUA LIPA

TM	LM	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	TREND%	STNS	IMPACTS	TREND%
1	NEW	Dua Lipa Dance The Night Warner	WMG	20,372	1116%	236	252.11	666%
2	40	Kylie Minogue Padam Padam BMG	IND.	19,922	408%	260	211.62	285%
3	4	Calvin Harris & Ellie Goulding Miracle Columbia	SME	25,644	15%	217	196.24	14%
4	24	Anne-Marie & Shania Twain Unhealthy Atlantic/Asylum/EMI	W/U	16,993	331%	231	184.	151%
5	1	Ed Sheeran Eyes Closed Atlantic	WMG	23,652	-16%	238	165.17	-32%
6	10	Tom Grennan How Does It Feel Insanity	SME	15,029	61%	219	163.87	18%
7	29	Becky Hill & Lewis Thompson Side Effects Polydor	UMG	15,131	182%	222	146.01	129%
8	7	Lewis Capaldi Forget Me EMI	UMG	16,002	-10%	232	139.79	-7%
9	5	Miley Cyrus Flowers RCA	SME	19,025	-10%	254	139.5	-15%
10	2	Jonas Brothers Waffle House Republic	UMG	19,969	3%	225	137.07	-41%
11	12	Jax Jones & Calum Scott Whistle Polydor	UMG	19,008	-1%	216	129.03	2%
12	19	Niall Horan Meltdown Capitol	UMG	11,662	67%	181	128.2	51%
13	8	Taylor Swift Anti-Hero EMI	UMG	14,711	-21%	237	119.67	-19%
14	14	D.Guetta/Anne-Marie/C.Leray Baby Don't Hurt Me Parlophone	W/W	15,936	1%	182	107.82	7%
15	9	Switch Disco & Ella Henderson React Relentless	SME	15,990	-4%	216	106.25	-24%
16	NEW	Jazzy Giving Me Chaos	UMG	8,745	204%	191	105.72	219%
17	18	Rudimental/C. Plank/Vibe Chemistry Dancing Is... Room Two	SME	8,819	37%	189	104.	20%
18	3	Lewis Capaldi Wish You The Best Vertigo	UMG	14,024	-20%	221	103.94	-50%
19	NEW	Pink Runaway RCA	SME	5,497	-	148	103.34	-
20	NEW	OneRepublic Runaway Interscope	UMG	7,772	1512%	204	103.21	1866%
21	NEW	Taylor Swift Karma EMI	UMG	5,932	1512%	135	100.18	690%
22	NEW	Jorja Smith Little Things FAMM	IND.	2,265	326%	132	85.31	419%
23	NEW	Blur The Narcissist Parlophone	WMG	2,065	260%	118	78.1	74%
24	20	Joel Corry & Becky Hill History Atlantic	WMG	7,820	-9%	179	76.93	-9%
25	22	Lewis Capaldi Pointless EMI	UMG	7,804	-2%	211	75.59	-1%
26	21	Becky Hill & David Guetta Remember Polydor	UMG	7,451	-6%	218	73.34	-12%
27	31	Harry Styles As It Was Columbia	SME	9,408	14%	250	71.79	14%
28	13	Rita Ora Ft Fatboy Slim Praising You BMG	IND.	12,456	-7%	236	71.06	-44%
29	NEW	Leigh-Anne Don't Say Love Warner	WMG	3,923	-	179	70.03	-
30	NEW	Dave & Central Cee Sprinter Live Yours/Neighbourhood	IND.	1,684	-	69	67.11	-
31	NEW	Pretenders Let The Sun Come In Warner	WMG	437	283%	21	66.32	921%
32	NEW	The Weeknd/Playboi Carti... Popular Interscope/Republic/XO	UMG	5,157	-	175	64.44	-
33	NEW	Miley Cyrus Jaded RCA	SME	1,852	-	88	64.26	-
34	45	Joel Corry & Caity Baser Dance Around It Atlantic	WMG	9,032	67%	181	58.4	20%
35	NEW	Royal Blood Mountains At Midnight Parlophone	WMG	964	793%	15	57.3	400%
36	NEW	Beverley Knight Last One On My Mind BMG	IND.	664	-	86	56.01	-
37	NEW	Hannah Laing & RoRo Good Love WUGD	UMG	2,927	382%	138	55.47	399%
38	NEW	Texas After All PIAS	IND.	1,756	32%	131	55.04	239%
39	NEW	J Hus Ft Drake Who Told You Black Butter/OVO/Republic	S/U	2,071	-	124	54.16	-
40	27	Pink Trustfall RCA	SME	8,607	-19%	177	53.47	-22%
41	NEW	Nathan Dawe, Joel Corry & Ella Henderson 0800 Heaven Atlantic	WMG	5,546	-	195	51.31	-
42	37	Harry Styles Satellite Columbia	SME	3,995	33%	170	50.98	-13%
43	38	Joel Corry & Tom Grennan Lionheart (Fearless) Atlantic	WMG	8,237	-10%	168	49.26	-14%
44	46	Loreen Tattoo Polydor	UMG	3,618	48%	139	48.54	3%
45	NEW	Kamille & Nile Rodgers Muscle Memory Believe	IND.	393	524%	26	47.99	1724%
46	15	Zara Larsson Can't Tame Her Black Butter/Sommer house	SME	7,226	-51%	214	46.66	-49%
47	47	Lizzo 2 Be Loved (Am I Ready) Atlantic	WMG	7,076	-10%	188	46.53	-1%
48	11	Post Malone Chemical Republic	UMG	7,171	-42%	194	45.58	-64%
49	41	David Guetta & Bebe Rexha I'm Good (Blue) Parlophone	WMG	6,366	-3%	198	45.14	-15%
50	RE	The Weeknd Blinding Lights Republic/XO	UMG	4,418	-5%	242	42.06	4%

UK TV AIRPLAY TOP 50

ELLIE GOULDING & CALVIN HARRIS

TM	LM	ARTIST/TITLE/LABEL	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	TREND%	STNS
1	1	Calvin Harris & Ellie Goulding Miracle / Columbia	SME	962	-6%	6
2	NEW	Jazzy Giving Me / Chaos	UMG	846	457%	6
3	2	Post Malone Chemical / Republic	UMG	815	-8%	6
4	9	D.Guetta/Anne-Mari/C.Leray Baby Don't... / Parlophone	W/W	798	27%	6
5	NEW	Kylie Minogue Padam Padam / BMG	IND.	763	1172%	13
6	4	Switch Disco & Ella Henderson React / Relentless	SME	727	-2%	5
7	NEW	Becky Hill & Lewis Thompson Side Effects / Polydor	UMG	715	544%	6
8	NEW	Dua Lipa Dance The Night / Warner	WMG	669	-	5
9	22	Jonas Brothers Waffle House / Republic	UMG	669	51%	5
10	3	Lewis Capaldi Wish You The Best / Vertigo	UMG	649	-15%	6
11	19	Fifty Fifty Cupid / Parlophone	WMG	607	23%	5
12	13	Miley Cyrus Flowers / RCA	SME	529	-9%	7
13	NEW	Jorja Smith Little Things / FAMM	IND.	509	521%	6
14	14	David Kushner Daylight / Miserable	UMG	501	-9%	5
15	5	Jax Jones & Calum Scott Whistle / Polydor	UMG	472	-36%	7
16	7	Ed Sheeran Eyes Closed / Atlantic	WMG	458	-34%	5
17	8	Libianca People / 5K	SME	457	-32%	6
18	50	Tom Grennan How Does It Feel / Insanity	SME	446	126%	5
19	29	Rita Ora Ft Fatboy Slim Praising You / BMG	IND.	444	42%	4
20	NEW	J Hus It's Crazy / Black Butter	SME	407	-	6
21	NEW	Dave & Central Cee Sprinter / Live Yours/Neighbourhood	IND.	395	-	6
22	NEW	Taylor Swift Karma / EMI	UMG	390	-	5
23	NEW	Loreen Tattoo / Polydor	UMG	387	136%	13
24	6	PinkPantheress Boy's A Liar / Warner	WMG	373	-49%	5
25	41	Harry Styles Satellite / Columbia	SME	367	39%	5
26	NEW	Lil Durk Ft J. Cole All My Life / Ministry Of Sound	SME	348	490%	6
27	10	Mae Stephens If We Ever Broke Up / EMI	UMG	343	-45%	5
28	NEW	Joel Corry & Caity Baser Dance Around It / Atlantic	WMG	339	688%	3
29	24	Rema/S.Gomez Calm Down / Jonzing Worldwide/Mavin	IND.	338	-17%	7
30	NEW	Bakar Hell N Back / Black Butter	SME	330	93%	5
31	12	FLO Ft Missy Elliott Fly Girl / Island	UMG	330	-46%	5
32	NEW	Niall Horan Meltdown / Capitol	UMG	328	165%	4
33	23	Raye Ft 070 Shake Escapism / Human Re Sources	IND	326	-24%	5
34	34	Raye Flip A Switch / Human Re Sources	IND	318	12%	6
35	NEW	Nines & Aisa Calendar / Warner	WMG	307	109%	5
36	16	Sigala/M.Muller/C.Baser Ft... Feels This... / Ministry Of Sound	SME	303	-41%	3
37	32	Harry Styles As It Was / Columbia	SME	294	1%	6
38	44	Jess Glynne Silly Me / EMI	UMG	290	15%	4
39	18	Metro Boomin/The Weeknd/... Creepin' / Republic	UMG	289	-43%	5
40	17	Zara Larsson Can't Tam.../ Black Butter/Sommer house	SME	285	-45%	5
41	NEW	OneRepublic Runaway / Interscope	UMG	278	-	5
42	15	Niall Horan Heaven / Capitol	UMG	273	-50%	6
43	11	Mae Muller I Wrote A Song / Capitol	UMG	264	-57%	6
44	21	Taylor Swift Anti-Hero / EMI	UMG	258	-42%	6
45	NEW	Rudimental/C.Plank/Vibe... Dancing Is... / Room Two	SME	254	107%	3
46	NEW	Anne-Marie/Shania Twain Unhealthy / Atlantic/Asylum/EMI	W/U	252	-	6
47	35	Pink Trustfall / RCA	SME	246	-13%	5
48	45	Venbee & Goddard Messy In Heaven / Columbia	SME	227	0%	5
49	NEW	Kim Petras & Nicki Minaj Alone / Republic	UMG	216	23%	7
50	49	George Ezra Green Green Grass / Columbia	SME	216	7%	5

RADIO MONITOR
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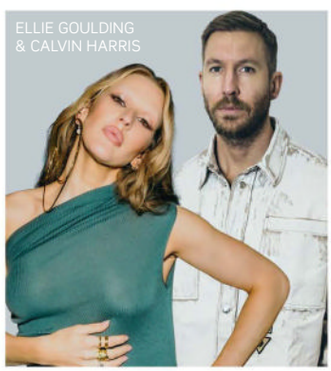
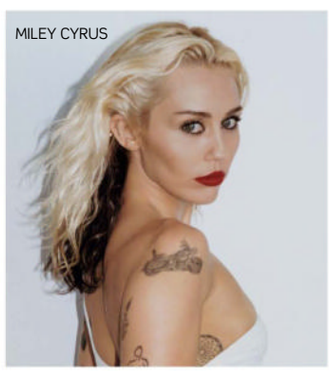
EU AIRPLAY

EU RADIO AIRPLAY TOP 50

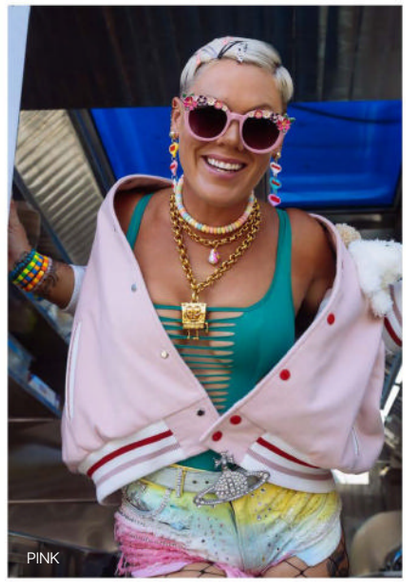
TM	ARTIST/TITLE		COMPANY	CORP GROUP	PLAYS	STNS	IMPACTS
1	David Guetta feat. A..	Baby Don't Hurt Me	Warner Music	WMG	106,944	1,341	2,510.73m
2	Ed Sheeran	Eyes Closed	Atlantic	WMG	109,362	1,604	2,490.54m
3	Pink	TRUSTFALL	Sony Music	SME	66,920	1,092	2,119.80m
4	Miley Cyrus	Flowers	Sony Music	SME	100,481	1,851	2,062.00m
5	Purple Disco Machine..	Substitution	Insanity Records	SME	74,124	1,089	1,773.03m
6	Dua Lipa	Dance The Night	Warner Records	WMG	86,356	1,558	1,656.03m
7	Post Malone	Chemical	Universal Music	UMG	60,138	1,150	1,268.68m
8	Calvin Harris feat. ..	Miracle	Sony Music	SME	75,925	1,169	1,153.63m
9	Loreen	Tattoo	Universal Music	UMG	51,308	1,133	1,064.07m
10	Michael Schulte x R3HAB	Waterfall	Universal Music	UMG	23,433	367	1,043.76m
11	Lost Frequencies, El..	Back To You	One Seven Music	SME	34,920	720	996.98m
12	Metro Boomin feat. T..	Creepin'	Universal Music	UMG	39,934	735	971.14m
13	KAMRAD	Feel Alive	Epic	SME	24,614	495	970.44m
14	Dermot Kennedy	Kiss Me	Universal Music	UMG	31,306	967	952.10m
15	Tiësto	Lay Low	Warner Music	WMG	40,751	634	898.05m
16	Linkin Park	Lost	Warner Records	WMG	19,121	394	884.11m
17	Taylor Swift	Anti-Hero	Universal Music	UMG	46,733	1,258	878.16m
18	Nico Santos	Number 1	Virgin Records	UMG	22,771	292	829.64m
19	Jax Jones & Calum Scott	Whistle	Universal Music	UMG	53,646	928	808.17m
20	OneRepublic	RUNAWAY	Universal Music	UMG	36,502	1,050	795.56m
21	Ray Dalton	Do It Again	Sony Music	SME	21,226	410	795.49m
22	Lil Nas X	STAR WALKIN (League ..	Sony Music	SME	27,929	776	786.38m
23	Zara Larsson	Can't Tame Her	Sony Music	SME	42,386	803	783.97m
24	David Guetta & Bebe ..	I'm Good (Blue)	Parlophone	WMG	39,944	1,258	733.44m
25	Imagine Dragons	Waves	Universal Music	UMG	18,752	308	720.73m
26	Måneskin	BABY SAID	Sony Music	SME	17,187	452	705.03m
27	Harry Styles	As It Was	Sony Music	SME	36,132	1,650	698.87m
28	Rosa Linn	SNAP	Columbia	SME	26,683	1,071	695.53m
29	Loi	Gold	VOLKSMUSIC	Ind.	19,671	499	686.15m
30	Tiësto & Tate McRae	10:35	Warner Music	WMG	31,582	867	650.81m
31	Lewis Capaldi	Forget Me	Universal Music	UMG	40,427	1,227	649.73m
32	David Kushner	Daylight	Universal Music	UMG	22,397	653	647.21m
33	Slimane feat. Claudi..	Chez Toi	Universal Music	UMG	12,918	152	626.97m
34	KAROL G X Shakira	TQG	Universal Music	UMG	16,860	415	617.42m
35	Aden Foyer	The Ballet Girl	Columbia	SME	15,935	295	600.77m
36	Felix Jaehn & Ray Da..	Call It Love	Universal Music	UMG	21,134	600	591.36m
37	Michael Patrick Kell..	Wonders	SMD/Columbia De	SME	15,037	291	573.04m
38	Leony	Somewhere In Between	Armada Music	Ind.	14,467	360	567.70m
39	R3HAB, Sash!, INNA	Rock My Body	Spinnin' Records	WMG	24,866	537	560.50m
40	Nuit Incolore	Dépassé	Pias	Ind.	11,165	139	550.36m
41	FAST BOY x Topic	Forget You	Universal Music	UMG	20,279	448	546.80m
42	Rita Ora feat. Fatbo..	Praising You	Bmg Rights Manag	Ind.	41,760	954	542.91m
43	Lizzo	2 Be Loved (Am I Ready)	Warner Music	WMG	21,143	819	521.44m
44	Libianca	People	5K Records	SME	15,384	481	511.94m
45	Kygo feat. Paul McCa..	Say Say Say	Sony Music	SME	23,108	509	487.94m
46	Ed Sheeran	Celestial	Atlantic	WMG	24,146	1,111	478.57m
47	Udo Lindenberg & Apa..	Komet	Warner National	WMG	10,595	227	472.34m
48	twocolors	Heavy Metal Love	Universal Music	UMG	15,385	364	468.75m
49	ROSALÍA & Rauw Aleja..	BESO	Sony Music	SME	11,435	269	465.52m
50	Leony	Holding On	Kontor Records	Ind.	16,225	314	465.42m

METRO BOOMIN


ELLIE GOULDING & CALVIN HARRIS


MILEY CYRUS

DAVID GUETTA


PINK

ED SHEERAN

STREAMING

Spotify

GLOBAL

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Eslabon Armado, Peso Pluma Ella Baila Sola
2	Grupo Frontera Un x100to
3	Yng Lvcas La Bebe – Remix
4	Fifty Fifty Cupid – Twin Version
5	Miley Cyrus Flowers
6	David Kushner Daylight
7	SZA Kill Bill
8	Harry Styles As It Was
9	Karol G TQG
10	Feid Classy 101
11	Peso Pluma PRC
12	Rosalía Beso
13	Rema Calm Down (With Selena Gomez)
14	Metro Boomin Creepin' (With The Weeknd...)
15	The Weeknd Die For You (With Ariana Grande)...
16	Junior H El Azul
17	Tyler, The Creator See You Again (Feat. Kali Uchis)
18	Yandel Yandel 150
19	PinkPantheress Boy's A Liar Pt. 2
20	Natanael Cano AMG

EUROPE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	David Kushner Daylight
2	Miley Cyrus Flowers
3	Loreen Tattoo
4	Käärijä Cha Cha Cha
5	Calvin Harris Miracle (With Ellie Goulding)
6	David Guetta I'm Good (Blue)
7	Rosalía Beso
8	David Guetta Baby Don't Hurt Me
9	Metro Boomin Creepin' (With The Weeknd...)
10	Harry Styles As It Was
11	Alessandra Queen Of Kings
12	Ed Sheeran Eyes Closed
13	Tom Odell Another Love
14	Eminem Mockingbird
15	Libianca People
16	Rema Calm Down (With Selena Gomez)
17	Fifty Fifty Cupid – Twin Version
18	OneRepublic I Ain't Worried
19	SZA Kill Bill
20	Karol G, Shakira TQG

UNITED KINGDOM

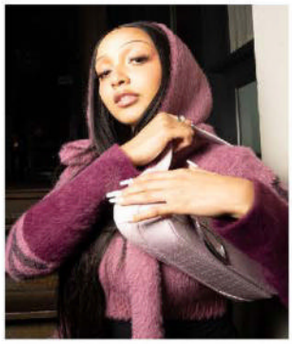
TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	David Kushner Daylight
2	Calvin Harris Miracle (With Ellie Goulding)
3	Miley Cyrus Flowers
4	PinkPantheress Boy's A Liar Pt. 2
5	SZA Kill Bill
6	Libianca People
7	Lewis Capaldi Wish You The Best
8	Ed Sheeran Eyes Closed
9	Taylor Swift Anti-Hero
10	Fifty Fifty Cupid – Twin Version
11	Harry Styles As It Was
12	Raye Escapism
13	Switch Disco React
14	Tyler, The Creator See You Again (Feat. Kali Uchis)
15	Loreen Tattoo
16	Rema Calm Down (With Selena...)
17	Post Malone Chemical
18	Lizzy McAlpine Ceilings
19	Jazzy Giving Me
20	Metro Boomin Creepin' (With The Weeknd...)

FRANCE

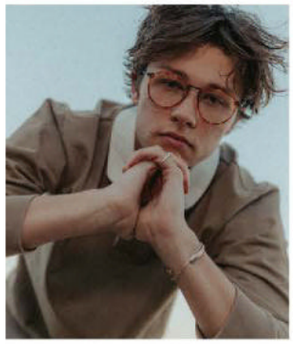
TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Naps, Gazo, Ninho C'est Carré Le S
2	SDM Bolide Allemand
3	PLK Demain
4	Ninho Freestyle Lvl Up 1
5	Gaulois Jolie (Feat. Ninho)
6	Tiakola Meuda
7	Miley Cyrus Flowers
8	Djadja & Dinaz Capitaine
9	No Limit La Rue
10	SDM Mr Ocho
11	Ayra Starr Rush
12	Werenoi Laboratoire
13	Hamza Nocif
14	Werenoi Ciao
15	Lomepal Decrescendo
16	PLK Nouvelles
17	Zola Amber
18	Werenoi Solitaire
19	Vacra Tiki Taka
20	Naps La Danse Du Roro

GERMANY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Udo Lindenberg Komet
2	Yung Yury Tabu
3	Apache 207 Neunzig
4	David Kushner Daylight
5	Reezy Expensive Shit
6	Ikke Hüftgold Bumsbar
7	HoodBlaq Pass Auf
8	Raf Camora All Night
9	Raf Camora Anna
10	01099 Anders
11	Bonez MC Cinnamon Roll
12	Miley Cyrus Flowers
13	Apache 207 Breaking Your Heart
14	Eminem Mockingbird
15	Tiësto Lay Low
16	Bonez MC Babylon
17	Reezy Shoot
18	David Guetta Baby Don't Hurt Me
19	HoodBlaq Carrera
20	Nina Chuba Mangos Mit Chili



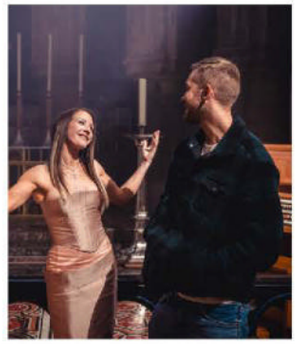
PINKPANTHERESS



DAVID KUSHNER

MILEY CYRUS

NAPS



ELLIE GOULDING & CALVIN HARRIS

NETHERLANDS

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Kevin Trust
2	Marco Schuitmaker Engelbewaarder
3	Loreen Tattoo
4	David Kushner Daylight
5	Maan Stiekem
6	Calvin Harris Miracle (With Ellie Goulding)
7	Miley Cyrus Flowers
8	Metejoor Wat Wil Je Van Mij
9	Turfy Gang Padellen
10	Libianca People

NORWAY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Kudos Haien Kommer (Sharkdog)
2	Brødrene Bausa Turné
3	Loreen Tattoo
4	Undergrunn Michelin Stjerner
5	David Kushner Daylight
6	Käärijä Cha Cha Cha
7	Emma Steinbakken Delilah
8	Alessandra Queen Of Kings
9	Albin Lee Meldau Josefin
10	Emma Steinbakken Floden

SPAIN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Saiko Supernova
2	Lola Indigo El Tonto
3	Rosalía Beso
4	Jhayco Mami Chula
5	Marshmello El Merengue
6	Feid Classy 101
7	Yandel Yandel 150
8	Karol G TQG
9	Vicco Nochentera
10	Chanel Clavaito

SWEDEN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Bolaget Ikväll Igen
2	Adaam 17
3	Käärijä Cha Cha Cha
4	Victor Leksell Fånga Mig När Jag Faller
5	Loreen Tattoo
6	Hov1 Grät
7	Naod Dum Av Dej
8	Eah Jé Beroendeframkallande
9	Thomas Stenström Andas In Andas Ut
10	Yasin Har Dig

UNITED STATES

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Eslabon Armado Ella Baila Sola
2	Morgan Wallen Last Night
3	Grupo Frontera Un x100to
4	SZA Kill Bill
5	Tyler, The Creator See You Again (Feat. Kali Uchis)
6	Yng Lvcas La Bebe – Remix
7	Fifty Fifty Cupid – Twin Version
8	PinkPantheress Boy's A Liar Pt. 2
9	Drake Search & Rescue
10	Peso Pluma PRC

vevo

STREAMING - MUSIC VIDEO

WORLDWIDE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Karol G, Shakira TQG
2	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music Video)
3	Feid, Young Miko Classy 101 (Official Video)
4	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
5	Shakira Acróstico (Official Video)
6	Yuridia, Angela Aguilar Qué Agonía (Video Oficial)
7	Post Malone, Swae Lee Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into The Spider...)
8	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For Africa...)
9	The Weeknd Save Your Tears (Official Music Video)
10	Becky G, Peso Pluma Chanel (Official Video)
11	Libianca People (Official Video)
12	Luis Fonsi Despacito ft. Daddy Yankee
13	CantaJuego Soy Una Taza (Version Mexico)
14	Mark Ronson Uptown Funk (Official Video) ft. Bruno Mars
15	Karol G Provenza (Official Video)
16	Karol G Amargura (Visualizer)
17	50 Cent In Da Club (Official Music Video)
18	Eminem Without Me (Official Music Video)
19	4 Non Blondes What's Up (Official Music Video)
20	Taylor Swift Blank Space

UNITED KINGDOM

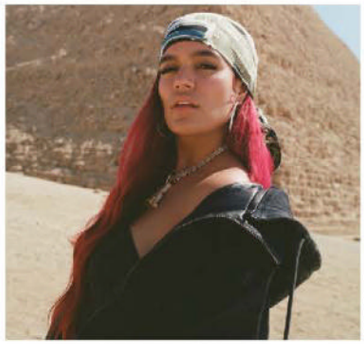
TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
2	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music Video)
3	J Hus ft. Drake Who Told You (Official Audio)
4	Libianca People (Official Video)
5	Switch Disco React (ft. Ella Henderson) (Lyric Video)
6	Calvin Harris, Ellie Goulding Miracle (Official Video)
7	French Montana ft. Swae Lee Unforgettable
8	J Hus It's Crazy (Official video)
9	Jazzy Giving Me (Official Visualiser)
10	Lewis Capaldi Wish You The Best (Official Video)
11	Post Malone, Swae Lee Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into The Spider...)
12	Dwayne Johnson You're Welcome (from Moana/Official...)
13	David Kushner Daylight (Official Music Video)
14	Ayra Starr Rush (Official Music Video)
15	Maroon 5 Girls Like You ft. Cardi B (Volume 2)...
16	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)...
17	Katy Perry Roar
18	Lady Gaga, Bradley Cooper Shallow (from A Star Is Born) (Official...)
19	Harry Styles As It Was (Official Video)
20	The Weeknd Save Your Tears (Official Music Video)

UNITED STATES

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Toosii Favorite Song (Official Video)
2	Morgan Wallen Last Night (One Record At A Time Sessions)
3	Karol G, Shakira TQG (Official Video)
4	Ice Spice & Nicki Minaj Princess Diana (Official Music Video)
5	Post Malone, Swae Lee Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into The Spider...)
6	GloRilla, Cardi B Tomorrow 2 (Official Music Video)
7	Becky G, Peso Pluma Chanel (Official Video)
8	SZA Snooze (Audio)
9	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music Video)
10	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
11	Taylor Swift ft. Ice Spice Karma (Official Music Video)
12	Lil Baby California Breeze (Official Video)
13	Dwayne Johnson You're Welcome (from Moana/Official...)
14	Chris Stapleton Tennessee Whiskey (Official Audio)
15	Yuridia, Angela Aguilar Qué Agonía (Video Oficial)
16	Chris Brown Under The Influence (Official Video)
17	21 Savage ft. J.Cole A Lot (Official Video)
18	Hardy ft. Lainey Wilson Wait In The Truck (Official Music Video)
19	GloRilla Lick Or Sum (Official Music Video)
20	Mark Ronson Uptown Funk (Official Video) ft. Bruno...

NEW ARTISTS – UK

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	David Kushner Daylight (Official Video)
2	Ice Spice & Nicki Minaj Princess Diana
3	Prinz, Gabriela Bee Highs & Lows (Official Video)
4	Halle Part Of Your World (From "The Little...)
5	David Kushner Daylight (Lyric Video)
6	Cat Burns Live More & Love More (SPY Remix...)
7	Konyikeh Teenage Dreams
8	Cat Burns You Don't Love Me Anymore (Official...)
9	Cat Burns Live More & Love More (Lyric Video)
10	Lauren Spencer-Smith That Part
11	Sam Fischer Alright
12	Patrick Topping Make Me Happy (Visualiser)
13	Do Nothing Nerve
14	Rvssian, Valiant, Tommy Lee Sparta Tic Tac Toe (Official Music Video)
15	Gwamz Last Night
16	LF System Dancing Shoes (Take Me Higher)
17	Libianca People (Visualiser)
18	Cat Burns You Don't Love Me Anymore
19	Rosier Go!
20	Nadine Blessed


KAROL G

TOOSII

MILEY CYRUS

DAVID KUSHNER

FRANCE

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Ayra Starr Rush (Official Music Video)
2	Louane Secret
3	Tiakola Meuda (Clip Officiel)
4	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
5	Libianca People (Official Video)
6	Indila Dernière Danse (Clip Officiel)
7	Kalash Mwaka Moon ft. Damso
8	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For...)
9	Soso Maness Petrouchka (Clip Officiel) ft....
10	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music...)

GERMANY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Miley Cyrus Flowers
2	Eminem Mockingbird (Official Music...)
3	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down
4	Shakira Waka Waka (This Time For...)
5	50 Cent In Da Club
6	Pink Trustfall
7	David Kushner Daylight (Official Music Video)
8	Tom Odell Another Love (Official Video)
9	Lewis Capaldi Wish You The Best (Official...)
10	Roland Kaiser, Maite Kelly Warum Hast Du Nicht Nein...

AUSTRALIA

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Miley Cyrus Flowers (Official Video)
2	Rema, Selena Gomez Calm Down (Official Music...)
3	Post Malone, Swae Lee Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into...)
4	Morgan Wallen Last Night (One Record At A...)
5	Taylor Swift ft. Ice Spice Karma (Official Music Video)
6	Katy Perry Roar
7	Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars Uptown Funk
8	Dwayne Johnson You're Welcome...
9	Maroon 5 Girls Like You ft. Cardi B...
10	The Weeknd Save Your Tears (Official...)

SPAIN

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Chanel, Abraham Mateo Clavaito (Official Video)
2	Vicco Nochentera (Video Oficial)
3	Lola Indigo, Quevedo El Tonto (Official Video)
4	Karol G, Shakira TQG (Official Video)
5	Shakira Acróstico (Official Video)
6	Sebastián Yatra, Manuel Turizo... Vagabundo (Official Video)
7	Marshmello, Manuel Turizo El Merengue (Official Video)
8	Feid, Young Miko Classy 101 (Official Video)
9	Rosalía, Rauw Alejandro Beso (Official Video)
10	Aitana Las Babys (Video Oficial)

ITALY

TM	ARTIST/TITLE
1	Marco Mengoni Due Vite (Official Video...)
2	Blanco, Mina Un Briciolo Di Allegria
3	Lazza Cenere
4	Geolier Come Vuoi (Official Video)
5	Rocco Hunt Non Litighiamo Più (Official...)
6	Geolier ft. Marracash Il Male Che Mi Fai (Visual...)
7	Rocco Hunt, Elettra... Caramello (Official Video)
8	Marco Mengoni, Elodie Pazza Musica (Official Video)
9	Rhove Pelé
10	Geolier X Caso ft. Sfera Ebbasta...

TikTok Trending

INSIDE THE MOST VIRAL TRACKS OF THE MONTH

UNITED KINGDOM

Central Cee & Dave
Sprinter

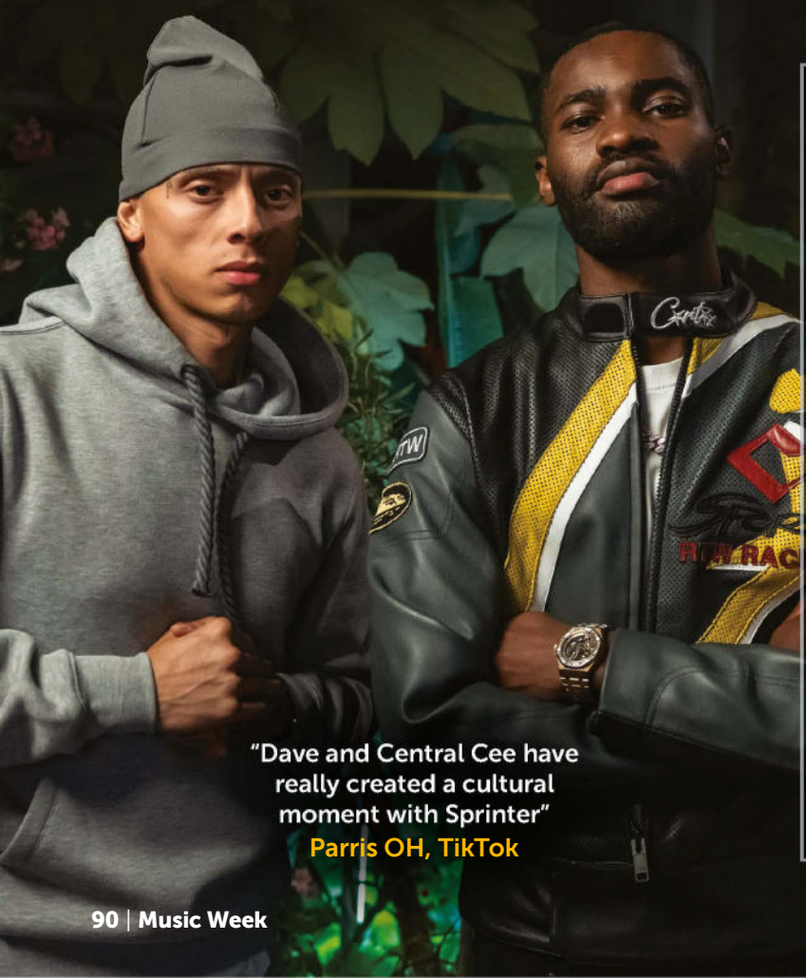
Video Creations: 207,400

This summer is shaping up to be big for UK rap, with Dave, Central Cee and their chart-topping single Sprinter leading the way. Released to celebrate their 25th birthdays, this hotly-anticipated track immediately gripped creators across the platform, becoming an essential soundtrack to kickstart summer '23. The duo have also released their joint EP, Split Decision, and were TikTok's featured artists for #NewMusic in June.

Parris OH, artist partnerships manager at TikTok, highlights the success Sprinter has had both on and off the platform, especially after Central Cee and Dave's performance at Glastonbury last month.

"Dave and Central Cee have really created a cultural moment with Sprinter," says OH. "It's a collaboration between two of the biggest UK rappers and the success of the chart-topping hit has been amazing to see. The duo have been our featured artists for #NewMusic, and the track has been at the centre of a dance trend on TikTok."

Reflecting on Glastonbury, OH added: "Sprinter has also only become bigger after Glastonbury, with Central Cee bringing Dave on stage to perform it to thousands of fans at Worthy Farm. We have no doubt that the track's viral moment still hasn't hit its peak yet, and we can't wait to see how our community will continue to support this iconic collaboration in British rap."



"Dave and Central Cee have really created a cultural moment with Sprinter"
Parris OH, TikTok

J Hus Ft Drake
Who Told You

Video Creations: 31,800

UK rap continued its summer takeover with the long-awaited return of Afro-fusion king, J Hus. Following a hiatus from the limelight, J Hus took to TikTok to announce his new album, Don't Say Militancy. After releasing the single It's Crazy, the rapper came back with Who Told You, which has a hook posing the question, *'Who told you bad man don't dance?'* and has had creators dancing all over TikTok. With its Drake feature, creators across the platform are enjoying showcasing their steps, from the Premier League's Jesse Lingard to FLO's Renée Downer.

Kylie Minogue
Padam Padam

Video Creations: 17,400

Pop icon Kylie Minogue is having a huge moment on TikTok thanks to her hit single Padam Padam. The song has reignited the love of long-time Minogue fans, whilst electrifying a crowd of new listeners in a celebration of music and dance. Padam Padam has resonated with TikTok's LGBTQIA+ community, and creators have turned the track into one of the unofficial anthems of Pride 2023. Dance challenges have also played a key role in driving the song's popularity, with fans emulating Minogue's choreography whilst also creating and sharing new routines.

GLOBAL

Jain
Makeba

Video Creations: 813,200

This 2015 single by French artist Jain is seeing a revival on TikTok. Originally written as an ode to Jain's childhood and a homage to South African singer and activist Miriam Makeba or 'Mama Africa', Makeba has become the latest song of the moment, with creators using the sound to show off their outfits and share recipe videos. Jain also jumped on TikTok to thank fans for using her song and to promote her new track, The Fool, whilst the hashtag #Makeba has racked up over 426.5 million views.

Daniel Pemberton
Spider-Man 2099 (Miguel O'Hara)

Video Creations: 562,300

Since the release of Spider-Man Homecoming, this soundtrack from Daniel Pemberton is making the rounds on TikTok. Fans across the world are using the sound to share their 'canon event', which refers to an important part of a character's life or self-development, with TikTok users. Creators are also using the soundtrack alongside the 'Your Canon Event' filter on TikTok to share their coming-of-age moments, whilst figures such as Halle Bailey have also jumped on the trend with the community.

Music Week

Inside the business of music. Established 1959

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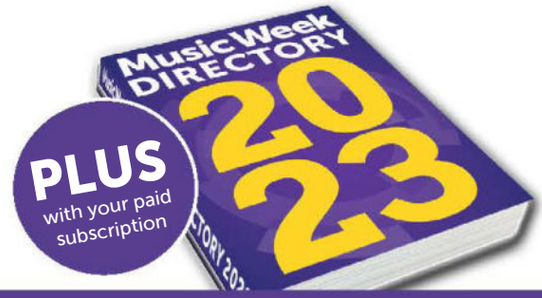

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THE Music Week ARCHIVE

5 years ago...

TOP STORY
MAJOR FRASER

Five years ago, *Music Week* was hailing Fraser T Smith as the "world's hottest" producer. Not that you needed to take our word for it, mind, given he was fresh from an Ivors win and a string of hits with the likes of Adele and Stormzy.

"This is the most fertile and the most successful period of my career," the producer extraordinaire said. "It's definitely the most poignant and testing musically and lyrically."

He had good cause to feel this way, too, when we caught up with him at his studio. Mainly because joining him for our shoot and interview were Dave – accompanied by his loyal dog Leo – and rising star Raye. At the time, Fraser T Smith was hard at work on Dave's debut Psychodrama and new tracks for Raye.

"Fraser's involvement stretches way past production," praised Dave. "When it comes to the lyrics, the concepts of the songs, he helps me keep it concise when I could stray off topic. He helps make sure I'm on top of it."

Raye was similarly effusive.

"Fraser knows my deepest, darkest secrets and that doesn't scare me at all," she told *Music Week*. "If the trust is there, then you can open up and write those songs that need to be written and heard, and I think that's what takes things to the next level."

It's fascinating to consider where things went from there. On top of being an in-demand producer, Fraser T Smith has also launched his own solo projects. As for Dave, his classic debut Psychodrama has not only sold 453,900 copies according to Official Charts Company data, it also won the 2019 Mercury Prize and Album Of The Year at the BRITs. Raye, meanwhile, is thriving as an independent artist with her single Escapism becoming her first No.1, and even scoring her an Ivor Novello Award for Best Contemporary Song. Not too shabby, if you ask us.

Also inside... **The 1975**'s manager **Jamie Oborne** talked us through the group's "paradigm shift" in consumption as they launched an ambitious two-album campaign... **Sony Music UK** CEO and chairman **Jason Iley** saluted **George Ezra**, who had just secured the biggest-selling British artist LP of 2018 by the year's mid-point with **Staying At Tamara**'s... **SoundCloud** CEO **Kerry Trainor** was "very pleased" with the service's growth, having implemented a turnaround plan after the cash-strapped platform was forced to seek $169.5 million in funding... Rising pop prospect **Madison Beer** declared she was feeling "empowered, independent, unstoppable and so happy" after the release of her debut EP... **Katie Derham**, **Jan Younghusband**, **Christine Webb**, **Emma Bloxham**, **Emma Wakely**, **Francesca Kemp** and **Kate Finch** gave us the lowdown on what to expect from the **BBC Proms**... **DF Concerts**' **Geoff Ellis** lifted the lid on the growth of **Trnsmt Festival**... **Whitney Houston**'s former manager and sister-in-law **Pat Houston** revealed all about **Kevin Macdonald**'s documentary **Whitney** – the first cinematic deep dive to be authorised by the late star's family and estate... **PIAS**' chief creative officer **Jane Third** reflected on her career in The Aftershow... George Ezra scored his first ever No.1 single with **Shotgun**, while **The Greatest Showman** soundtrack notched up its 21st week at No.1 in the album charts...

20 years ago...

Inside: Martina Topley-Bird Jason Nevins Damien Rice Finley Quaye

MUSICWEEK

CMP

Changing chart day is among proposals examined by chart body in bid to tackle sales crisis

Singles: time for radical measures

Singles

Airplay swells for Starsailor

Powerplay snaps up Andys stores

New force in independent retail emerges as Eastbourne-based chain buys up four former Andys outlets p4

PR push target new music mags

Despite the demise of dance titles such as Muzik, new launches are now offering fresh options for promotion p9

This week's Number 1s

Albums: Beyoncé

Singles: Beyoncé

Airplay: Beyoncé

26.07.03/£4.00

TOP STORY
SINGLE MINDED

A series of radical steps were being considered as part of a strategy to help re-energise the single format, which wasn't necessarily a surprise given that sales in the first half of 2003 were down more than one third on the previous year. *Gulp.* The Official Charts Company-led project was looking at various options, including reducing the window between radio date and release date, moving towards a two-track CD single, and the publication of charts on Fridays, with new releases moving from their traditional Monday drop to a Friday or Saturday.

RETAILS OF WOE

Hot on the heels of the Andy's Records chain going into administration after more than 30 years of trading, Eastbourne-based Powerplay Direct was in the process of buying four of its remaining 21 stores to create a new force in independent retail. Powerplay CEO Colin Bassett, in particular, hoped the purchase would turn the spotlight back onto the sector. "There's more to music than Pop Idol," he told *Music Week.* "We're bringing independence back into fashion."

WHEN THE MUZIK STOPS

The closure of Muzik magazine, plus the news that print publishing powerhouse Emap was set to "scale back" its websites for Q, Smash Hits and Kiss, was seen as symptomatic of a volatile year in UK media. Still, there was some hope with the launch of magazines such as Bang and X-Ray, plus The Observer's own music supplement. "Anecdotally, people seem to say the same thing – that there isn't one magazine out there that meets all their needs," reflected The Observer's Caspar Llewellyn Smith. *Ahem.* Except *Music Week*, obvz...

Also inside... The **RIAA**'s threat to prosecute **illegal file-sharing** uploaders resulted in a dip in users on sites... **Coldplay** and **The Thrills** were predicted to be the favourites to scoop the **Mercury Music Prize**, though it was eventually won by **Dizzee Rascal** for **Boy In Da Corner**... **Polydor** was revealed as the label home for the new series of **Fame Academy**... **Beyoncé** reigned supreme with her hit single **Crazy In Love** and debut album **Dangerously In Love** securing a chart double...

25 years ago...

FOR EVERYONE IN THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

music week

Polydor takes shape with Grainge's 'loft conversion'

Epic stays on top in singles market share

BPI/Bard venture to oversee charts

Virgin keeps Our Price flag flying

Polydor MD **Lucian Grainge** outlined a new structure and vision that would consolidate its position as the dominant force within the **PolyGram** group... The **BPI** and **Bard** formed a new JV to oversee the **official UK sales charts**... **B*Witched** led a strong Q2 sales performance by **Epic** to strengthen its presence at the top of the singles market share... **Virgin** underlined its commitment to the **Our Price** brand... **Another Level**'s **Freak Me** was crowned No.1 single, while **Beastie Boys**' classic **Hello Nasty** debuted at the top of the albums chart...

30 years ago...

Paul McCartney's manager **Richard Ogden** quit as MD of the star's management and publishing company... **Helen Shapiro** struck an 11th hour royalties deal with **EMI** after threatening to picket the annual meeting of its parent company... The **BPI** reported that invisible music-related exports such as **publishing royalties** totalled around £500 million in 1991, making the music industry the UK's second highest export after tourism... **Take That**'s **Pray** was the No.1 single, while **UB40**'s album **Promises And Lies** debuted at the top spot...

music week

For Everyone in the Business of Music

24 JULY 1993 £2.80

Macca's manager quits

EMI placates Shapiro

16-page Datafile expands charts data

Billy Joel

Music among top export earners

NEW MUSIC SPECIAL

THE AFTERSHOW

The industry's biggest names have the last word on their life in music...

Sting, (artist)

It goes without saying that **Sting** is one of the finest – not to mention most successful – songwriters the UK has ever produced. Fresh from being named the 23rd Fellow of the Ivors Academy, he discusses streaming, **Sir Lucian Grainge** and teaming up with **Shaggy**...

INTERVIEW: JAMES HANLEY

Shape of my art: *Sting – The Message In A Bottle theatre production set to his music is on tour now, and is due for cinema release in 2024*

Songwriting has largely been an isolated experience for me...

"I've never had a long term partner like Lennon & McCartney, or Rodgers & Hammerstein, or Chris Difford and the guys from Squeeze. Although I've written a couple of nice ones with Dominic [Miller], my guitar player. Shape Of My Heart, for example, started as a Dominic riff and then we worked on it together, and that's been one of our most successful songs. But generally, it's a solitary pursuit for me."

Writing songs doesn't get any easier...

"It's probably easier when you're starting than it is when you've been doing it for a few years because you don't have the filters. You don't say, 'Well, I've already written that,' or, 'Somebody else has written that,' you just get it all down. But now, I'm much more critical. It's a more difficult process."

I have mixed feelings on streaming...

"As a way of receiving music, it's extraordinary. Any song you think of that was ever recorded, you can access instantly, which is a fantastic learning tool. At the same time, it does tend to make music more of a commodity than it was before. Having to seek music out, having to go to the record store, buying it, bringing it home, taking it out of a sleeve, putting it on a deck and putting the needle on – that was a ritual. As was reading liner notes: knowing who played bass on that particular track, where it was recorded, the name of the engineer, all of that information was valuable to me growing up as a musician, and now that's kind of gone. It's like having a cup of coffee now, so it's more expendable, I suppose. So I prefer the old way, but it's obvious how convenient it is to stream."

Martin Kierszenbaum, my manager since 2016, is also a producer...

"He has a master's degree in music, so he can talk to you about the flatted fifths and harmony, which is interesting for me. He has a great business head, but also a music head and it works fantastically well. He's a creative part of what's happening – he's a very good producer, a good keyboard player and a smart guy. What I want in a manager is a creative sounding board, as well as being able to sit in a boardroom and negotiate deals. But Martin, for me, is a creative asset more than anything else."

I've known Sir Lucian Grainge a long time...

"And we've forged a great relationship over the years. It's been mutually successful and I know that will carry on. He's a good captain of the ship and I'm happy to be on board."

I knew my collaboration with Shaggy would raise eyebrows...

"I like the two eyebrows raised because, for me, the most important element in music is surprise. People were like, 'Sting and Shaggy – what the fuck?!' And then we made it work. I respect him greatly: he's a fantastic artist, a great lyricist and his sense of rhythm and performance abilities are sensational. He's a good foil to me. He brings stuff out of me that is important and I inspire him in a different way. I'm sort of a disapproving school teacher and he's wild, but it somehow works. Was I a school teacher once? Yeah. Well, we're not paid enough so..."

My recent Las Vegas residency was a pleasant surprise...

"I was a little apprehensive. I wasn't quite sure who the audience would be in Vegas, yet my apprehension was completely unnecessary. The audience are fantastic; they come from all over the world and they loved it. I did 22 shows at Caesars Palace and all sold out. It wasn't like the old days when Tom Jones was stuck there for years on end, night after night. You would do four shows a week for three weeks, and then go back to touring, so it wasn't that onerous. I would do it again in a minute."

I'm leaving next year open...

"I need to be in that period where I can say, 'Okay, what have I learned? Do I have anything to say? If not, shut the fuck up.' If I have something to say, I will say it."

"The element of suprise is important – people were like, 'Sting and Shaggy? What the fk!?'"**

Sting

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